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(Hansard)**

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Mardi
21 novembre 2017

Speaker: Honourable Dave Levac
Clerk: Todd Decker

Président : L'honorable Dave Levac
Greffier : Todd Decker



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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 21 November 2017

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 21 novembre 2017

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Good morning. Please join me in prayer.

Prayers.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Point of order, the member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to move a motion without notice.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Once again, please; I didn't hear it.

Mr. Randy Hillier: I seek unanimous consent to move a motion without notice.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington is seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice. Do we agree? I heard a no.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

ATTRIBUTION DE TEMPS

Hon. Bill Mauro: I move that, pursuant to standing order 47 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 174, An Act to enact the Cannabis Act, 2017, the Ontario Cannabis Retail Corporation Act, 2017 and the Smoke-Free Ontario Act, 2017, to repeal two Acts and to make amendments to the Highway Traffic Act respecting alcohol, drugs and other matters, when the bill is next called as a government order, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment and at such time the bill shall be ordered referred to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy; and

That the Standing Committee on Justice Policy be authorized to meet on Wednesday, November 29, 2017, from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. and on Thursday, November 30, 2017, from 9 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. and from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. for the purpose of public hearings on the bill; and

That the Clerk of the Committee, in consultation with the committee Chair, be authorized to arrange the notice of public hearings; and

That the deadline for requests to appear be 10 a.m. on Monday, November 27, 2017; and

That if not all requests can be scheduled that the Clerk of the Committee provide the members of the subcommittee and their designates with the list of requests to appear by 11:30 a.m. on Monday, November 27, 2017; and

That the members of the subcommittee and/or their designates prioritize and return the list to the Clerk of the Committee by 2 p.m. on Monday, November 27, 2017; and

That the Clerk of the Committee distribute a draft copy of the agenda to the committee members and their designates by Tuesday, November 28, 2017, at 11:30 a.m.; and

That each witness will receive up to five minutes for their presentation followed by nine minutes for questions from committee members; and

That the deadline for written submissions be 6 p.m. on Thursday, November 30, 2017; and

That the deadline for filing amendments to the bill with the Clerk of the Committee shall be 2 p.m. on Monday, December 4, 2017; and

That the committee be authorized to meet on Thursday, December 7, 2017, from 9 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. and from 2 p.m. to 10 p.m., for the purpose of clause-by-clause consideration of the bill; and

On Thursday, December 7, 2017, at 4:30 p.m., those amendments which have not yet been moved shall be deemed to have been moved, and the Chair of the committee shall interrupt the proceedings and shall, without further debate or amendment, put every question necessary to dispose of all remaining sections of the bill and any amendments thereto. At this time, the Chair shall allow one 20-minute waiting period pursuant to standing order 129(a); and

That the committee shall report the bill to the House no later than Monday, December 11, 2017. In the event that the committee fails to report the bill on that day, the bill shall be deemed to be passed by the committee and shall be deemed to be reported to and received by the House; and

That, upon receiving the report of the Standing Committee on Justice Policy, the Speaker shall put the question for adoption of the report forthwith, and at such time the bill shall be ordered for third reading, which order may be called that same day; and

That, when the order for third reading of the bill is called, two hours of debate shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the bill, apportioned equally among the recognized parties. At the end of this time, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

That, notwithstanding standing order 81(c), the bill may be called more than once in the same sessional day; and

The votes on second and third reading may be deferred pursuant to standing order 28(h); and

That, in the case of any division relating to any proceedings on the bill, the division bell shall be limited to five minutes.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): The minister has moved government notice of motion number 42. Back to the minister.

Hon. Bill Mauro: I believe that the parliamentary assistant will be making our remarks later in the debate.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Point of order. I recognize the member.

Mr. Randy Hillier: I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice to split Bill 174.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): The member is seeking unanimous consent. I hear a no.

Further debate? I recognize the member from Lanark-Frontenac—continue, sir.

Mr. Randy Hillier: I'll be sharing my time with the member from Kitchener-Conestoga this morning, and the member from Kawartha-Haliburton-Brock.

Never before have we seen so few people—the Premier and her cabinet—attempt to subvert and destroy our democracy that benefits so many people. Bill 174 began debate a week ago in this House. It's an omnibus bill that has substantial and significant unrelated public policy provisions in that bill. It has the creation of a new cannabis retail corporation. It has the framework to complement the federal legislation to permit legalized recreational cannabis use. It also has a schedule for the Smoke-Free Ontario Act, which will have significant ramifications on tobacco harm reduction.

It also has a schedule for school bus safety and other unrelated Highway Traffic Act amendments that have nothing to do with cannabis. Nothing, nothing at all do these very disparate subjects have—it is unwarranted for them to be in the same piece of legislation, and it is unprecedented that a government, in a Western democracy, in a country that is held in the highest regard around the world, is acting like a tin pot authoritarian.

We have seen so often that this government has taken a path, a path that we have never seen the likes of before in this country. A 30-minute time allocation debate on very substantial labour legislation, Bill 148: They've limited debate at third reading to 30 minutes between the three parties on that one.

Now we see them coming in with an omnibus bill and time allocation. A week after we began debate in this House, a week after the very first day, I tabled a motion in this House to split Bill 174.

0910

I'll read the motion, Speaker, that we didn't get unanimous consent on earlier by the Liberal members: "That, in the opinion of this House, the government should separate Bill 174, Cannabis, Smoke-Free Ontario and Road Safety Statute Law Amendment Act ... and reintroduce the legislation as three distinct pieces of legislation as follows: ... the Cannabis Act, 2017 ... the Ontario Cannabis Retail Corporation Act ... Smoke-Free Ontario Act ... and amendments to the Highway Traffic Act."

That's a proper way of doing legislation in a proper democracy. Bundling these things up into an omnibus bill and then having the gall to bring in a time allocation motion a week after the introduction—I don't think I have to tell anybody in this House that legalizing recreational cannabis and creating a cannabis retail corporation are new steps in our country. These are transformational steps, Speaker. They require the robustness of a full debate to safeguard the public interest when we are taking on such substantial new policies.

Six and a half hours of debate, and the government brings in a time allocation motion. It is offensive. It offends the very purpose of this House. It offends every member who ever sat in this House. It offends democracy when this government thinks that the safeguards of debate are unimportant and that they can dismiss at will.

Speaker, the time allocation motion also diminishes and only permits, by my count, up to 28 individuals in Ontario to make a presentation to the standing committee after this motion gets passed.

Mr. Michael Harris: Twenty-eight?

Mr. Randy Hillier: Twenty-eight people will be permitted to express themselves for five minutes each at this standing committee. Do you not believe that a bill of this nature ought to have a number of different perspectives brought to our attention, to have those perspectives examined, to have them analyzed, to have them investigated so that we can develop good policy?

Speaker, I find the very notion that this government believed that it was warranted to bring in the time allocation—I just find that that is something that we would see from an authoritarian government. This is not something that we would ever expect to see in our country. There's a reason our country ranks highest in the world. It didn't get to that ranking because of authoritarian steps by majority governments. It got there through robust public discussion and debate and a respect for our parliamentary and representative democracy. These guys—

Interjections.

Mr. Randy Hillier: The member from Northumberland is certainly one that should be talking about, as he's facing actions from the falsehoods that he put forward about his constituents, another authoritarian type of action.

Speaker, I said last week that the actions of this government were bordering on the criminal. I was wrong. They are acting as criminals.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I would ask the member to withdraw.

Mr. Randy Hillier: I cannot withdraw on the fact that this government are acting as criminals.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Order.

Again, I'll ask the member to withdraw.

Mr. Randy Hillier: I apologize for having to use that sort of—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Order, please.

All I'm asking is that you withdraw. If you don't withdraw, then you know the consequences of that. What you said was unparliamentary. So again, I ask the member: For that one comment, will you withdraw?

Mr. Randy Hillier: This government ought to withdraw—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I take that as a lack of withdrawal. Therefore, the member from Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington is named.

Mr. Hillier was escorted from the chamber.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Order, please. I don't need any commentary from the government side.

Further debate? I recognize the member from Windsor West.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: Thank you, Speaker. I'll try to keep the morning theatre to a minimum.

This morning, I was prepared to speak to Bill 174, the Cannabis, Smoke-Free Ontario and Road Safety Statue Law Amendment Act. Many of my constituents in Windsor West have come forward and expressed concerns about the bill. There are some provisions in this bill that aren't clear to the people in this province, and they want the government to explain exactly what they mean in these provisions. But instead of being able to actually debate the bill, here I stand debating the fact that the government doesn't want to talk about the bill. They want to shut down the debate and not talk about the bill.

Interjection.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: And now we have a member on the Liberal side saying it needs to go to committee. Well, we all know how that works. The Liberals use their majority in committee to do whatever they want. They don't really listen to the people who come to committee to share their concerns. They have their set of talking points and their set of questions that they go back to. They use leading questions when they're talking to the presenters in order to get the response that they want.

Speaker, I have one constituent in particular who would love for all of us to have the opportunity to continue debate on this bill, to have a fulsome discussion on this bill, before it gets to committee. By the time it gets to committee—well, frankly, the fact that the government wants to shut down debate shows that they've already made up their minds and are not interested in listening to the people of this province. But I know that my constituent Jon Liedtke would love to have an opportunity to have some of his questions and concerns around this bill answered, and he is not the only one. I know that he is once again going to be incredibly disappointed in this Liberal government—because this is not the first time this government has used the tactic of shutting down debate and then claiming that in committee they are actually listening to the people of this province.

Another thing they like to do is say, "Well, it should go to committee. We're trying to move it through quickly. We want it to go to committee to hear the voices of the

people in this province." And yet, more often than not, committee time is limited, the amount of time you have to actually put forth your name to be heard at committee is limited, and they only hear people here in Toronto.

Maybe they're not familiar with Windsor. They should be. They had cabinet ministers for decades in Windsor. They should be well aware of where Windsor is located, but apparently they're not.

Speaker, I know that you realize what a task it is to get from our area of the province to Toronto, how cumbersome that can be for some people. Some people think it's only a four-hour drive—a four-hour drive, a long drive at that. Some days it can take six or seven hours to travel.

0920

Speaker, I'm sure you're well aware that down our way—actually, in your area—there was yet again an accident on the 401 that shut down that highway, that very dangerous stretch of highway, Carnegie Alley, as it's referred to, because they don't have the barriers that they should have had years ago to protect the people from Chatham-Kent-Essex and Windsor. But people are tasked with getting on the road, especially this time of year, when weather can be—

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Unpredictable.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: Unpredictable, thank you—when it can be unpredictable, and it can be a very dangerous drive to get here; or they have the cost of airfare, or they take the long train ride to get here. It's unfair that the government wants to shut down debate in this House, in the chamber, and say that they want to move this into committee really fast so they can hear from the people of the province and, yet, often, they don't travel the bills. They don't take them down our way. They don't take them down to Windsor to hear from people. They don't take them down to Chatham to hear from the people down that way. They don't travel up north to hear from the people up that way. They put it on the people of the province to come here, and then say that they're open to hearing from people.

So Speaker, I think it's, frankly, shameful that we stand here yet again with the Liberal government trying to shut down debate on some incredibly important legislation that many people have some very serious questions and concerns over.

One of the things I want to talk about that that constituent of mine, Jon Liedtke, had brought forward was a piece in the bill that talks about cannabis dispensaries and the transportation of cannabis. He is a medical marijuana user. He has a licence; he has a prescription to be able to consume cannabis for some health concerns. An interesting piece that he brought to my attention is that there is a piece in the bill that is not entirely clear. It talks about how you cannot transport a prescribed substance. It doesn't say "cannabis." It doesn't say "prescribed cannabis." It doesn't say "medical marijuana." It just says "prescribed substances." You cannot transport those in your vehicle. His concern is not just that he won't be able to go to a legal dispensary and pick up his medication, but does that mean that you and I can't go to our phar-

macy and pick up the prescriptions that our doctor has prescribed for us? This is a question he has, and yet we're not going to get it answered here because the government wants to shut down debate. I'm not going to have an opportunity to bring forward all of his concerns.

When it goes to committee, if they limit committee, if they limit the amount of time people can actually put their name forward—we've seen it many times before, where it's a very truncated process; there is very little time. By the time the government makes the decision of when people can actually put their names forward—that can happen in days; sometimes not even days, sometimes hours. It gets out to the public and they only have a very limited time to actually put their name forward. So that information isn't really out there broadly, and by the time people see that they can present, the window of opportunity has already closed. So people like John and others who have concerns about this bill won't have an opportunity to come to committee and actually ask their government the questions that they have.

The other questions that have come out of my riding of Windsor West and the broader Windsor area are around the announcement that we will have a dispensary. The elected representatives in Windsor—the city councillors, the mayors and the council members in surrounding municipalities—weren't really talked to about this; they weren't really consulted about this. They didn't know we were going to have a dispensary. They don't know what it's going to look like or where it's going to be. How many dispensaries are we going to have? What is the delivery of that service going to really look like? People in my riding want to know. When we're talking about cannabis dispensaries, what is taxation going to look like on this cannabis that's being dispensed through these dispensaries? They want to know. How do you get chosen to work? What's the screening process to work in one of these dispensaries? Again, they want to know. How many are we going to have and where are they going to be located?

Without proper consultation with the elected representatives in a municipality, it really is a slap in the face to those that were elected to represent that particular municipality. It's a slap in the face of the democratically elected city councillors, mayors, MPPs and MPs to not have those discussions, to not give them a heads-up: "Hey, we are looking at your city as possibly having a dispensary." It's a slap in the face to not have conversations with those municipalities and say, "Where exactly do you think the best place would be for this dispensary or for multiple dispensaries in your community? What do you think it should look like as we roll these particular dispensaries out?"

Once again, the government has made sweeping decisions without consultation, and now we find ourselves in a position where they have said their piece but they don't want to consult with those of us that have been elected to bring the voice of our constituents to this House. This is something we're seeing far too often. It's not democratic. To say, "I have said my piece and now I'm going to shut

down debate because I don't want to hear from you": They may as well put their fingers in their ears and go, "Nah-nah-nah-nah-nah; I'm not listening," because that's exactly what has happened.

We see it far too often. We just went through it yet again with back-to-work legislation. The government drops the ball. They don't do their part when it comes to having a conversation, those tough conversations, and consulting and finding out how to make things better. They just come in and say, "We are all-knowing; we are all-seeing." We should call the Liberal government the Wizard of Oz, because they hide behind a curtain, pretend to be something that they're not. They pretend to be all-knowing and all-seeing. They know better than anybody else.

The sad thing is, it's not just my constituents that have questions and concerns. It's not just my colleagues here in the NDP caucus whose constituents have questions and concerns. It's not just the Conservative caucus who have constituents that have questions and concerns. It's the constituents of the Liberal government, the Liberal caucus. But what they are saying to their constituents is: "Your opinion doesn't matter. Your concerns don't matter. They only matter come election time, when we want your vote. But once we're here, we don't want to hear from you because we know better." And that is wrong.

Here I stand talking about the fact that, yet again, the government wants to shut down debate on a very important piece of legislation. Once again, they've rolled something into that legislation—

Interjection.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: Yes, no pun intended—that they think they can go out to the public and say, "We've done something good"—and that's the issue of cameras on school buses—"so just look at that. Don't look at the fact that we don't want to talk about the other pieces. Don't look at the fact that we are shutting down debate and we don't want to hear from you. We've done good." That will be the spin. That will be the spin coming from this government: "We did something good, and the other parties, well, they had questions and concerns about that. Shame on them for questioning us."

They like to do that. They like to point fingers over at this side of the House and say, "Shame on you for having questions and concerns." Well, shame on them for trying to shut down the voices of our constituents by bringing forward time allocation motions like they have today and shutting down debate.

0930

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate? I recognize the member from Kitchener—Conestoga.

Mr. Michael Harris: Well, thanks, Speaker. I was going to thank you for the opportunity to address Bill 174, but that's what I would have said if this government didn't pull the plug, preventing all but a handful of PC speakers from joining the bill debate.

Speaker, I want to tell you—and I don't expect you to reply to me, because you can't—guess how many PC

caucus members were able to speak to Bill 174? Any guesses out there? Three. Guess how many NDP caucus members got to speak to Bill 174, any guess? Three. How many government members? A few more, because there are more of them, obviously—until, hopefully, June of next year—five. So we've got a total number of 11 MPPs who had an opportunity to speak to Bill 174, a massive, omnibus bill: three, six, and five—oh, and Jack just spoke, so that's 12. Around 10% of Parliament here in the Legislature actually had an opportunity to speak to Bill 174 at second reading.

Now, if not for the government's move to choke off debate, I would have told you that as transportation critic, I'm disappointed to be debating these serious Highway Traffic Act measures as part of a larger omnibus bill to usher in an era of pot sales at the CCBO. You see, I was already disappointed with this government's approach. Today, I'm insulted at this government's complete manipulation and corruption of legislative conventions and protocols. So instead of what I wanted to say, I will—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I would ask the member to withdraw that comment.

Mr. Michael Harris: I'll withdraw.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Continue.

Mr. Michael Harris: So instead of what I wanted to say, Speaker, I will tell you now that the Liberal government's game plan to shut down debate is completely undemocratic and unacceptable.

Here is the Liberal government celebrating Bill 174 as its response to federal cannabis legislation and drug-impaired driving—this is serious stuff—and yet they won't let the transportation critic speak to it, when they have crammed it full of Highway Traffic Act measures. The fact is, the government had already failed to provide a platform to properly debate and consider cannabis distribution in Ontario when they gave us a bill that they jammed full of Highway Traffic Act and other measures that should have no place in cannabis distribution and legislation.

Speaker, now that the time has come up, I would seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice to split Bill 174.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Order. The member from Kitchener-Conestoga has asked for unanimous consent to split Bill 174. I heard a no.

Please continue.

Mr. Michael Harris: Well, that's a shame, Speaker. They have had multiple opportunities to do this, and it is unfortunate. But let's be clear: The Liberal attempt to cloud the issue is to prevent proper focus and debate on important measures that have nothing to do with the production or distribution of cannabis. Today, we don't even have a chance to discuss the fact that the Liberals have crammed this bill with careless driving and distracted driving penalties and, of course, school bus camera legislation that we on this side of the House have been pushing for years.

I want to commend the member for Chatham-Kent-Essex on his multiple attempts to keep kids safe across the province. We've had multiple school years that started in September where we could have had this legislation already in place. I'll tell you, when I pick up my kids, Murphy and Lincoln, from the bus, when I get a chance, there have been times when people have blown by that bus. It's scary—scary—to think.

We can't even call for the separation of key Highway Traffic Act measures the government failed to move forward on or support when proposed by, of course, PC opposition members, amending previous legislation, legislation that clearly dealt with the opening up of the Highway Traffic Act; we needed to insert these same measures in cannabis legislation that has little connection with the Highway Traffic Act. What in the world does school bus camera safety legislation—measures that should already be in place, by the way—have to do with the sale of cannabis? I'm hoping that the members opposite answer that question. What in the world does school bus camera safety legislation have to do with the CCBO? I want to know. The answer—I'll answer for them because they won't—is pure politics. It was an obvious attempt to force our support without debate and politicize issues that have no business being politicized.

Today, we have an even further step towards shutting up the opposition before we even get a chance to be heard. Again, we are debating within a totalitarian regime where all opposing voices are silenced before they can be raised. It's offensive, it's disgusting, but you know it's hardly surprising, as this has been about politics all along for them. It was politics when they failed to support these same measures at committee back in May, and it's politics today. Back in May, when I introduced an amendment to Bill 65, legislation that clearly already dealt with the opening of the Highway Traffic Act, the safe schools act, the Liberal members pulled every trick in the book to ensure we couldn't talk about school bus cameras. Today, they're pulling out all the stops to silence debate on Bill 174.

Not much, of course, has changed. I recall the member from Kitchener Centre immediately opposing my school bus camera motion—a motion that came from, of course, the bill put forward by the member for Chatham-Kent-Essex. I recall the member from Kitchener Centre immediately opposing my school bus camera motion, stating: "What Mr. Harris is discussing, school bus cameras, is outside the mandate, outside the scope, of this piece of legislation. Therefore, I would recommend that we say that this motion should not be submitted."

That said, Speaker, I'm pleased to say that the Chair did not share her opinion, noting that "I did look very, very closely at the scope of the bill, and I found that there are similarities in the technology that is being proposed in this particular bill—the technological advances that have been made. I believe that it's worthy of being discussed here."

And then, before the debate had a chance to be completed, there was the member again trying to end the discussion. She went on by saying, "I'd like to suggest

that we move on" before voting, both that day and in the subsequent committee hearing against these same school bus camera measures.

It's hardly surprising, Speaker, as this was our fourth attempt—and you know that all too well—to instill the student safety that could be realized through the support of school bus cameras. Two private members' bills they failed to move forward at committee and two separate amendments that they also failed to support. I can't believe we've missed these opportunities to enhance student safety, only to have the Liberal members turn around and insert the measures in cannabis legislation that has little evident connection with the Highway Traffic Act.

Speaker, the safety of our communities, our students and our roads should never be used as a pawn to move the government's agenda forward. The fact is that we've said from the start that we agree with many of these important measures, but jamming them all together on the omni-canna-bus prevents the proper due focus, consideration and debate that they deserve, and certainly that is deserving of the discussion surrounding pot distribution here in the province of Ontario. And now we don't even get to have that discussion. It's wrong, it's undemocratic and it's a contravention of proper procedure.

Instead of time allocating, we should be ensuring that we actually get this right. The fact is that this is a huge concern for all Ontarians. They're depending on us to get it right. They see the potential for the oncoming wave of impaired drivers once the windows open at the CCBO and they want to know that government is there to ensure the safety of motorists, pedestrians and all who travel on our roads and sidewalks.

Recently, we were honoured to have a chance to be joined in the House by our safety partners, the CAA, and had a chance to discuss our concerns with the potential oncoming of cannabis legislation and drug-impaired driving. They too have done a lot of digging on this file. They've gone to their members, the motorists of Ontario, and from what they're hearing, there is a growing and very serious concern as to what we have in store. While these numbers haven't been finalized yet during our meetings, the reps were noting that over 75% of those they spoke to were indicating road safety as a serious concern for them once cannabis is legalized, with around two thirds believing that cannabis-impaired driving will, in fact, become more frequent.

Speaker, that concern seems well warranted when you consider that two in five current marijuana users claim to have driven under the influence. Two in five, or basically 40% of those using marijuana climbing behind the wheel after ingesting cannabis: Those kinds of numbers only further underline the need for those of us in this House to ensure we get it right, to ensure we give these issues the focus and debate they deserve, to ensure the continued safety of motorists right across the province.

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Anyone questioning the need for increased measures need only look south of the border, where the cannabis

legalization route has meant increased accidents and further concerns over the impact of drug-impaired driving.

That's why we have been calling for the separating out of key sections of this bill to give them the proper consideration they deserve. If you look at the federal government, they have separated Bill C-45 and Bill C-46, the legalization and the Criminal Code aspects of cannabis. New Brunswick: They get it. With their cannabis legislation, in that province, for example, they have five pieces of legislation to deal with the separate aspects of distribution, retail, use, impairment and awareness. That's the way to do it: Separate the bills to give each aspect the focus and attention it deserves.

The Liberals should be doing the right thing: Quit the political game-playing and separate out the sections of the bill that have nothing to do with the production/selling of cannabis. But they don't do the right thing. They don't. In fact, this is completely the wrong thing, the wrong direction, the move of a dictatorial government that fails to respect the principles our democracy was in fact built on.

Speaker, again, I can't express the depths of my frustration that we're not given the opportunities to discuss these issues, as the Liberals have chosen to silence the debate. It's completely wrong and it goes against the principles of informed debate on which all legislation should be formed.

I know I'll be sharing the rest of our time with my colleague from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock. I want to thank you, Speaker, for my shorter period of time that I had today, but I also want to note how very disappointed I am with what has gone on here. Shame on the Liberals.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mr. Michael Mantha: It's always a great privilege to stand here in my place and voice the concerns of the great people of Algoma-Manitoulin.

Unfortunately, today I stand here once again when the Liberal government is time-allocating and shutting down debate. For those back home, what that basically means is—a lot of people have asked me in my riding, "Why do certain bills really get speedy movement, get into committee, versus the proper discussion that they rightfully are entitled to?" My explanation to them is: "Depending on what the issue is, and whatever suits the government of the day, they will time-allocate, which is what they've been doing." What that does is, it really limits the opportunity for us as opposition members, as MPPs, all of us within this House who take our role as representatives of all of our communities and the people across this province in order to bring their voices and their views here across at Queen's Park, in order to make the legislation better, in order to make it work, in order to enhance it, in order to make the right decisions so that we get it right when we roll it out.

I'm one of those individuals, as I'm sure are the other 105 who are with us, who takes their role as an MPP quite seriously. I enjoy the engagement that I have with

my constituents back home in order to come in and have discussion. Often, I have stood in my place, or come to my desk, prepared to deliver those comments or bring those views in order to enhance legislation, only to be told that the axe was coming down and there was going to be no further debate on the legislation. I think it's very important that I bring some of the concerns that have been brought through many discussions that I've had.

Let's talk about this particular issue. Our critic gave the lead on this particular piece of legislation on Thursday of last week.

Interjection: Thursday afternoon.

Mr. Michael Mantha: Thursday afternoon; thank you. Thursday afternoon. And here we are, Tuesday morning, axing the debate in order to rush this into committee.

Mr. Speaker, I don't know about you, but this discussion has been going on for a heck of a long time. This is not something that just came out of the blue. We've been talking about legalizing this.

I personally know of instances where family members have actually benefited from having cannabis available to them. I can tell you of a loved one who was tragically suffering with cancer. With the treatment they were getting, they were having extreme difficulty absorbing the nutrients within their food. They were very nauseous. This wasn't that long ago. We were successful in getting the cannabis product and we made them some foods. And do you know what, Mr. Speaker? Unfortunately, I lost that family member, but fortunately, his last dying days were a little bit more empathetic, were a little bit better, were a little bit more comfortable for him while he passed away.

There are, indeed, big benefits. Often, I go into classrooms and talk to students about this. I have been doing this for a very long time, especially when the federal government made the announcement about legalizing pot. Jeez, I remember the last provincial election; I was going door to door and people were wondering when it was going to get done then. Even prior to that, they were hoping. "If you're going to legalize pot, put your sign on my lawn," is what they would say.

It's a greater discussion, especially with the students. A lot of them, when you're sitting in their classrooms and you're talking to these students, look at you and they say, "It's an exciting thing." All right, well, the exciting thing is now, yes, let's have an adult conversation in regard to how we're going to do this and the benefits. Let's not just look at the recreational use of it, but let's make sure that we get the utmost health benefits of it.

Ce qui fait que, nous voici ce matin. On est ici en train de discuter de la répartition du temps sur un projet de loi dont on parle depuis des années dans nos écoles, dans nos classes, dans nos villages, aux cafés. Juste jeudi passé, on a fait une décision. Notre critique a actuellement donné son discours sur le projet de loi. Nous voici déjà, ici aujourd'hui, et la répartition du temps est limitée. Mercredi, on va envoyer ça au comité et puis au comité on est supposé de faire de l'ouvrage dynamique. On est

supposé d'améliorer le projet de loi. On est supposé de donner nos idées. On est supposé de tout faire.

Mais ce qui arrive c'est que le gouvernement libéral, avec la majorité, va prendre le projet de loi. On sait, d'après ce qu'on a vu par expérience, que les suggestions qui viennent des partis d'opposition ou du public ne sont pas nécessairement acceptées. Elles sont entendues, mais on n'agit pas sur les idées qui sont données. Ce qui fait que le gouvernement va prendre son rôle. Les discussions vont se passer relativement bien. Puis, deux jours : le 29 novembre de 4 h à 6 h, deux heures; le 30 novembre de 9 h à 10 h 15 et puis de 2 h à 6 h. On parle d'un sujet qu'on cherche à implémenter depuis des années, et on ne se donne que cette période de temps-là?

Je veux vous laisser savoir que dans ma région, il y a plusieurs communautés qui cherchent à avoir le service. Comme je disais dans mon discours, il y a beaucoup d'améliorations, il y a beaucoup de bénéfices qui peuvent venir de la vente de cannabis. Mais voici la réalité pour les gens du Nord : peut-être qu'un centre va venir à Sudbury; peut-être qu'un centre va venir à Sault-Sainte-Marie. La réalité est que si tu es à Manitouwadge, à Hornepayne, à Meldrum Bay ou à Gore Bay, tu es à quatre heures des centres où tu peux recevoir le cannabis—quatre heures. Ça, c'est la réalité dans le Nord.

Attends un peu, là, monsieur le Président : il y a eu une suggestion pour améliorer la situation. On va rendre les produits disponibles sur les services Internet. Voici une autre réalité de la vie dans le Nord : il y a plusieurs communautés qui n'ont pas Internet, qui n'y ont pas accès.

Coudonc, je le sais, moi : j'ai une communauté à Dubreuilville où les étudiants qui sont encore à l'école pour faire leurs devoirs n'ont pas accès à un service fiable. Ils n'ont pas accès pour simplement faire leurs devoirs. Pourquoi? Parce que le service est inondé et puis les améliorations qui sont nécessaires ne sont pas en train de se faire. Pourquoi? À cause du fait que la compagnie qui donne les services détermine que : « Non, on n'a pas assez de services ou d'allocations, ce qui fait que ça ne justifie pas les investissements qu'on a besoin de faire pour vous donner l'Internet nécessaire. »

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Ça, c'est la réalité dans le Nord. Est-ce qu'on a eu des discussions avec les communautés autochtones? Je peux vous dire, monsieur le Président, qu'il y a beaucoup de « concerns », beaucoup de problèmes, et des suggestions, aussi, qui sont sortis des communautés autochtones. Les chefs des communautés autochtones sont tous ici à Toronto cette semaine pour avoir des discussions sur la santé de leurs communautés, leurs besoins, la santé mentale et puis tout ce dont ils ont besoin pour leurs communautés, et est-ce qu'on a pris les étapes nécessaires pour avoir les discussions avec eux? Encore, je reviens au point que j'ai dit : pourquoi est-on en train de fermer la porte à la discussion sur un sujet sur lequel on a tellement besoin de temps pour discuter?

C'est vraiment désastreux et puis c'est vraiment un problème qu'on a du point de vue du gouvernement libéral. On doit faire certain de prendre toutes les chances

qu'on a pour que tous les coins de la province aient la chance de participer dans le débat et de donner leurs idées, et que le projet de loi soit amélioré.

Speaker, I just want to come back to a point that I had made earlier. It was just on Thursday of last week that our lead was given on this bill, and this morning, we hear from the Liberal government that debate will collapse—or they will shut down debate, I should say—and we're going to get two days to debate a piece of legislation on which a discussion has been going on for years in this province with regard to how we should be doing it and if we want to do it.

And let me be clear: We're very much in favour of doing this. That bothers me even more: Why are we rushing this? There is no obstruction that is being done by the opposition members. We want to see this bill move forward. I highlighted some of the benefits of having cannabis available in a personal situation that I alluded to earlier in my speech, Mr. Speaker. The benefits are there, but there are also some concerns in regard to how the access is going to be made, where it's going to be made available, how it's going to be available, how many of these stores, where these stores are going to be, and what you're going to do when you travel with it.

We need that time, but two days is what we have: Wednesday, November 29, from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. and then on Thursday, November 30, from 9 a.m. to 10:15, a whole hour and 15 minutes, and then again in the afternoon from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m., another four hours.

Next week—we talked about this last Thursday. We've been talking about this for years and now, today, we're going to shut it down and we're going to shove it down Ontarians' throats. Why? Because the Liberal government knows best.

What I alluded to also earlier is that my constituents who are in my riding of Algoma-Manitoulin have some great concerns. Maybe in this legislation we're going to get a dispensary centre in Sudbury. Maybe we're going to get a dispensary centre in Sault Ste. Marie. We're not sure yet, but maybe.

Here's the reality that a lot of my constituents who want and know and need access to cannabis face. If you are in Hornepayne, if you're in Manitouwadge, if you're in Gore Bay, you are not going to travel four hours—if not five, depending on the winter road conditions that we have, and that's a whole other discussion that we're going to have another day—to get access to this cannabis, to get access to the product, to get access to a better way of life in order to ease the pains that you have.

Again, I am very much in favour. I know I've experienced it personally. I have seen it with family members who have gone through so much pain when they are on their last days suffering from cancer treatments and how cannabis can actually enhance and help people retain their foods so that they can get some type of energy and move on. I have seen the benefits of it. I have personally witnessed it and many of us in this room have as well.

Why are we rushing this? Why are we not given the opportunity to have a greater discussion about this?

I know that when I go into my schools and talk to students across this province and engage with them—this is an exciting thing for those children, for different reasons. They heard from the federal government campaign four years ago, “We're going to legalize pot.” It's a funny discussion to have among students in the classroom, but then you sit down with them and take the time to have a serious adult discussion with those students, their eyes and their minds opened up, especially when you share a personal story of the benefits that could come from this. But then there are the important issues that you need to deal with: the legalization, the access, the procedures, the dispensary centres. How are you going to tax this? How is that going to help? Where do we go? How do we get it?

These are all questions that a lot of people have, and they're giving us two days to figure that one. We've had a discussion about this for years, and in two days they're going to ram this down our throats and, “We think we know best, and we're going to get it done.”

When I talk from my place on behalf of the good people of Algoma-Manitoulin—and I wish we would have had more time. I wish I wouldn't be talking about shutting down debate on this particular piece of legislation, because there are a lot of people who have a lot to offer and a lot to say about this. Unfortunately, here we are. Here we are, once again, where the Liberal government has decided to shut down debate on an important issue that affects not only some but all Ontarians. That's very disappointing.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Ms. Laurie Scott: I was so wanting the government to stand up and tell us the reason why they're bringing in time allocation on Bill 174, the Cannabis, Smoke-Free Ontario and Road Safety Statute Law Amendment Act, one week after they introduced it and debate began in the Legislature. That is undemocratic. That is so wrong on so many levels.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Hear, hear.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Yes, we have to tell more people because they should be revolting at this government's lack of consultation and lack of democracy on two very important statutes. It's really inconceivable what they've done. I am just beginning to hear from my constituents in Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock on a lot of the pieces of this bill. This bill is not a small bill. It involves a lot of pieces of legislation. I'm going to speak later about the number of situations that they're going to force people to be in, especially the community safety people within our communities, to protect the general public on the cannabis laws that are so quickly being rushed through this Legislature.

The first thing that bothers me on this side of the House, besides the jamming through of so many measures in the bill that go way beyond the scope of cannabis, is the community safety issue. Building on this omnibus bill is very, very cynical. “Omnibus” means that there are a whole bunch of changes to pieces of legislation

crammed in a bill that is not going to be debated properly and thoroughly. It's actually disrespectful to the Legislature and to us who are trying to represent the people of our ridings and the citizens of Ontario in general.

Our front-line officers, for example, have been screaming about the fact that they're rushing legislation through, both federally—I know that the feds have mandated that the provinces bring in cannabis legislation—

Hon. Bill Mauro: There you go.

Ms. Laurie Scott: But you've known this for a little bit of time, the minister I speak to over there. You've known this for a little bit of time. You need to listen to what the police are saying about how this is going to be rushed through so quickly. They're not going to be able to train their members that fast.

Mr. Speaker, I know you, as the member from Chatham-Kent-Essex, had brought in a bill that aims at establishing serious consequences for drivers who pass school buses with stop signs and flashing lights. It includes the installation of cameras on school buses to crack down on dangerous drivers. It's a great bill.

Mr. John Yakabuski: What has that got to do with cannabis?

Ms. Laurie Scott: It's a great bill. In fact, there was another bill, I believe earlier this year, that your bill could have been brought into. It was school transportation safety or a transportation safety bill.

Mr. John Yakabuski: They wouldn't put that in there?
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Ms. Laurie Scott: They wouldn't put that in that bill. It made sense for that to be enveloped in there. But they didn't do that.

Instead, they are tucking it into this piece of legislation about cannabis, about the Highway Traffic Act—talk about inappropriate, talk about mismanagement of government legislation. That is a glaring example of how—the private member's bill for school bus safety could have been folded in and brought in earlier. How many school seasons have passed since it was first introduced? They're neglecting the safety of students.

This bill, with changes to both the Highway Traffic Act and the Smoke-Free Ontario Act—obviously, unrelated to the distribution and sale of recreational cannabis. They deserve to be debated on their own. The fact that this bill is even dealing with one of these issues would be a lot to handle. Now we have two major pieces of legislation thrown into an omnibus bill.

So, Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice to split—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Order, please.

This question with regard to unanimous consent has already been dealt with in this House.

I'll refer back to the member for further debate.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Mr. Speaker, we've had so much concern, and all of us on this side of the Legislature should try to have this bill split. I don't agree with your ruling, but I appreciate the fact of your ruling, and I will abide by it and continue on.

I'm going to talk a little bit about electronic cigarettes, which is a new policy area. The science around e-cigarettes is still developing. It would be wise to listen to a wide array of experts on this topic.

I spoke to two of my constituents on Friday—talk about upset; they're having a great deal of concern. They've been working with the federal government on Bill S-5.

The federal government separated sections in the Tobacco Act. This government is trying to treat the vaping section as part of tobacco, but it is completely different. The feds have recognized vaping products to be completely different, and they've been working with Health Canada for a long time to get this right. They've actually built businesses—and here's the thing: We want vaping. We want people to leave tobacco. Is that not the healthy thing that we're trying to do?

The government has spent an inordinate amount of money in trying to do smoking cessation. Vaping has great opportunities there, and you've seen the results already.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: No, actually, we haven't.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Actually, there has been some—

Interjection.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Yes, I'll send it over to you when I get it. I don't have it right here in my written notes—as I was talking to them.

Health Canada spent a lot of time and they separated it.

The fact is that with e-cigarettes, they have to go into a store, they have to get a flavour that matches their taste—this is a very appropriate approach. They need to test, they need to pick the flavours. If they have a product they like, that helps them stay off tobacco, stay off smoking. Stores that want to do that will probably have to close, and the manufacturing to go with this will probably have to close.

They mentioned that Manitoba actually got it right. So I say to the minister, why don't you look at other provinces that are doing that? Right now, both my manufacturers and my stores feel like they're going to close down, and they're there for harm reduction for people who want to stop smoking.

The most common age group is 40-year-olds who have smoked for a while and who want to get off smoking. They feel it actually goes against their charter rights for harm reduction.

The NHS have great studies over in England. They want regulations; they don't disagree with that—but not to be considered like tobacco.

I thank those constituents for the education that I received in that on Friday. I know the member from Huron-Bruce just got an email from Alex Dunn—

Interjection.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Well, I say to the minister: Let them have a chance to go to committee, through the process. You're giving them only seven and a quarter hours to come into committee, and that's everybody: That is the police. That is the CAA. That is everybody that has concerns with these two big pieces of legislation—

Mr. John Yakabuski: All across Ontario—14 million people.

Ms. Laurie Scott: —and yes, as my colleague says, everyone from across Ontario. How are they going to travel in so quickly because you are ramming this legislation through on time allocation? Seven and a quarter hours isn't even a full working day.

It is unconscionable that this government, on this type of legislation which should be separated to start with, is cramming this through in such a very tight timeline. But the government likes their legislative tricks, and they won't give the people of Ontario the chance to express their opinions on so many issues. And they should listen to them because we don't believe they have this legislation right—not even close—and it is huge. So it's all about politics. They're pushing it through. The people of Ontario—no question—deserve better.

My colleague from Lennox and Addington already tabled a motion to split the three schedules into separate bills, because what possible reason is there to consider changes to the Highway Traffic Act in schedule 4 and the changes to the Smoke-Free Ontario Act alongside cannabis? It doesn't make sense. As I mentioned before, we're being forced to rush this legislation through.

The simple truth is, there's no way this government can be trusted to get the cannabis control issue right in a way that protects community safety. I want to give you an example here. I hosted a press conference last week where the Ontario Convenience Stores Association presented a 10-year study showing an alarming and consistent increase in the use of contraband tobacco, which is distributed by organized crime. What that shows us is that the government is failing to protect Ontarians and to control illegal distribution of this unregulated product that is harmful to health and is spreading among our youth. Today, contraband tobacco products are more accessible than ever. The Wynne government has been totally ineffective in enforcing our laws. If they can't even manage the contraband tobacco issue properly, how can we trust them to properly implement the new cannabis regime?

That was brought out quite clearly in the press conference. They've seen an increase in contraband use. They don't know what chemical products are in those cigarettes that are made somewhere and then sold—and I know that, in all our communities in Ontario, there's somebody's trunk that's open and they're selling contraband tobacco, which is not regulated with guidelines, as I said—the chemicals that are in it. It's affecting our young people. The increase in smoking in young people is increasing.

If they won't deal with that major issue—and that's a huge issue for tax revenues and it's a huge issue for convenience stores' viability. Seven stores a week are closing. It is horrific. I have been here speaking about this for over 10 years, and still this government has not done appropriate management of contraband tobacco. They even gave the example of the province of Quebec and what they are doing and what a difference that has

made. Again, Mr. Speaker, there are examples out there that this government can follow on contraband tobacco.

I'm especially troubled, as community safety critic, to hear the warnings from our police forces about their lack of resources to meet the July 2018 deadline for legalization of cannabis. As OPP Deputy Commissioner Rick Barnum recently told a federal committee hearing, "If legislation is ready to go July 2018, policing will not be ready to go August 1. It's impossible." I repeat, "It's impossible." So why is it that this government insists on pushing forward in such an irresponsible way when our police are so clear in their opposition? As I said, this legislation—the debate started last week, for heaven's sake. We have hardly had a chance to debate. There are so few members—I have the list: only three of us on the PC side, three on the NDP, five government and one independent have spoken to this massive bill.

Deputy Commissioner Barnum estimated that the police will need six to eight months from the time the provincial legislation is in place before they'll be ready to enforce the new laws. He also said that the OPP has only 83 officers who are trained to recognize drug-impaired driving, and estimates they will need up to 500 officers to properly enforce the law. How does the government intend to close this massive gap? You can't ignore what they're saying. Are they just going to throw our police services under the bus, as they so often like to do? They so often like to throw the police under the bus, so we see this repeated again.

They just don't get how serious the public safety risks are around this approaching deadline. They're clueless about the resources our police officers will need to tackle drug-impaired driving, which will impose huge new costs on police forces and municipalities.

Why has the Premier so far been silent on this issue? Why won't she commit to supporting policing in dealing with this heavy financial burden? The deadline is coming, whether we like it or not, but the least the government could do is to reassure police that they have the funding they need for training and an essential roadside test for impaired driving.

Unfortunately, this government showed us with Bill 175, the police services act—which is also on the order paper, which I fear they may bring time allocation on also and speed it through—that they simply do not have respect for our front-line police officers. It's shameful. We shall wait to see next week, because the police services act, although they just introduced it a couple of weeks ago and we just started debate last week—will that be under the same cloud of time allocation—rush debate, rush committee, get it through before the middle of December without listening to the consequences of that bill?

Another major concern I have in this bill is the lack of public education focused on our youth. I've heard from many parents who are concerned about the increased availability of cannabis and how it will affect their children.

Mr. John Yakabuski: With no corresponding education for youth.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Where's the education? It is so important to be proactive and to educate our youth so that they can make informed decisions regarding cannabis use. New Brunswick's legislation, for example, establishes a stand-alone fund to promote youth education, to ensure they are well-informed on use and abuse, and the effects of cannabis on health. There's nothing like that here. I don't hear the government speaking about that. I hear lots of parents concerned about it.

There has been study after study about the brain's development and how we have to be very cautious. The brain is still developing up to 25 years of age, so—

Mr. John Yakabuski: Mine's still developing.

Ms. Laurie Scott: The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke has some questions about his brain development still ongoing—so maybe you shouldn't approach the cannabis topic. But the government is simply failing Ontarians, parents and youth.

The government has been very irresponsible in their approach to Bill 174. Each of the topics in the bill is complex, in many cases completely unrelated to others. Each deserves to be properly debated. It's always a very sad day when the government abuses its majority to bundle together a bunch of unrelated measures into a single bill—and now to end even the limited amount of debate we have. It's opportunistic. It's undemocratic.

Yet again, copying another colleague's private member's bill and stuffing it into a bunch of unrelated legislation just adds to the cynicism for this government. As I said, how can they be denying school bus safety, Mr. Speaker? It's so inappropriate. The least they can do if they have any respect for this Legislature and for the people of Ontario is to support our motion to separate Bill 174 into three separate bills, so the measures can be properly and thoroughly debated in this place. I won't be holding my breath, and I should probably stop speaking because I know another couple of members—oh, I've only got a couple of minutes anyway, I guess, Mr. Speaker, before you call the deadline.

There were lots of opportunities that the government could have used to make this legislation better. They needed to take the time. I realize that the federal government is mandating the provinces for a July 1, 2018, implementation of cannabis, but this topic was coming. They knew it in the federal election over two years ago. They could have been doing more to consult with people. Obviously other provinces have. When I gave the examples of New Brunswick, Alberta and Manitoba—they've done it, and Quebec is starting to put out implementation.

I didn't agree with the federal government that they should download to the provinces to make a patchwork—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you.

Debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): The time, unfortunately, is now 10:15. This House will stand recessed until 10:30.

The House recessed from 1015 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Would the members please join me in welcoming a special guest in the Speaker's gallery, the former MPP for Niagara South during the 36th Parliament, MPP for Erie–Lincoln during the 37th and 38th Parliaments, MPP for Niagara West–Glanbrook during the 39th, 40th and 41st Parliaments, and leader of the Progressive Conservatives, Tim Hudak.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That's the first time, in my almost seven years, of heckling for introducing somebody.

Interjection: But it was friendly.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Wow. Let's continue with the introduction of guests. The member from Oxford.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I would like to welcome the Ontario Real Estate Association to Queen's Park, and a special welcome to realtors who are here representing the great riding of Oxford. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I'd like to welcome realtors all the way from Timmins. Imagine that, being such a far distance and coming down here to meet with us. Good friends all, we meet on regular occasions: Michel Blais, Marc Leroux and Anne Marie Vaillancourt.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I, too, want to acknowledge people here from the Ontario Real Estate Association today and all the realtors who were here this morning for the MPP breakfast meeting with a number of members. I just want to give them a big welcome and thank them for being at Queen's Park today.

Mr. Todd Smith: I'd like welcome a couple of realtors as well from the Bancroft and District Real Estate Board: Cheryl Budarick and Dana Yonemitsu. Welcome, all the way from Bancroft.

Miss Monique Taylor: I had a wonderful meeting this morning with the Ontario Real Estate Association and I would like to welcome some guests. We have George O'Neill, Louis Piriano, Kathy Della-Nebbia, Valerie Webster and Nicolas von Bredow. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Granville Anderson: I'd like to welcome Roger Bouma and Wendy Giroux, who are here today with the Ontario Real Estate Association. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Norm Miller: I'm pleased to welcome realtors from Parry Sound–Muskoka—Debbie Gilbert, Crystal Henderson, David Reid and Debbie Vernon—who are in the members' west gallery. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Bill Mauro: I'm pleased to welcome as well from the Ontario Real Estate Association three people from Thunder Bay and northwestern Ontario: Barry Lynch, Randi Cameron and, Speaker, a gentleman who is a great, great friend to both of my parents, who are both former realtors from Thunder Bay, Bob Pfaff, in the members' east gallery. Thanks for joining us.

Mr. Ross Romano: I too want to welcome a couple of members of the Ontario Real Estate Association here

from my riding of Sault Ste. Marie. Those are Kimberly Clouthier and Andrea Gagne. Kimberly actually was one of our pages not too long ago as well, I believe I heard. Thank you very much for being here today.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: From the London St. Thomas real estate association I'm really pleased to welcome Costa Pouloupoulos, John Geha, Jeff Nethercott, Eavan Travers and Chad Lovell. Welcome to you all.

Mr. Jim Wilson: I'm pleased to welcome to the Legislature today some former staff members of mine and some former PC staff members: Matt Thornton, Adam Yahn, Jamie Hofing, Larissa Smit and Chris Dacunha. They are joined by their OREA colleague Lindsay Stevens.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: I would like to welcome Henry Spiteri and Mike Douglas from my riding of Barrie who are here today with the Ontario Real Estate Association.

I would also like to welcome my constituency assistant, Brian MacKay.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I too want to recognize a realtor from my hometown of North Bay and a good friend of mine and my wife, Patty, Steve Kotan.

Hon. Michael Coteau: Joining us today in the east members' gallery are Devranie, Michael and Farah Persaud, the family of Arianne Persaud, who is my legislative assistant. I would like to welcome them to the Legislature and also thank them for raising such a great young lady who works every single day to make sure that this Legislature is in good hands.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I'd like to welcome Glenn and Lucy Thorel, who will be joining us later during question period. They're not here yet, but they will be here soon.

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I'd like to welcome from the Ontario Real Estate Association, from Milton, Oakville and Burlington, realtors Aziz Kanjee, Jack McCrudden, Tamer Fahmi and Stephanie Lai. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Please join me in welcoming the provincial director for central Ontario for the Ontario Real Estate Association, Bradley Mayer-Harman.

I would also like to congratulate Chris Dacunha, who has recently gotten engaged.

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: I would like to extend a warm welcome to Barb Guiden, Christianne Elizabeth Newton, Sylvie Marie Deshaies and Colleen Marie Emmerson from the Ontario Real Estate Association board; as well as a warm welcome to Tim Hudak and Lindsay Stevens, the government relations person for the Ontario Real Estate Association. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Bill Walker: I'd like to introduce William Ballard and Stan Reljic—who also met with Jim Wilson—Karen Cox, Dawn-Lee McKenzie, Mike Revell and Gail McCartney.

I heard Tim Hudak was in the House. Welcome.

Mr. Joe Dickson: I'm pleased to introduce this morning, in the east gallery at the lower level, the president of the Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association, Patrick Daly. At the same time I'd like to introduce the director of legislation and political affairs

for the Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association, Stephen Andrews.

I'd be remiss if I didn't mention that Patrick Daly is perhaps the longest-serving president/chair of a school board, having done that for 23 years now.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: I'd like to welcome today Mike Gibbons and Barb Phillips. They are here representing the Chatham-Kent real estate board. Congratulations for being here, and thank you.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I am also pleased to welcome realtors from my area of Durham region. Roger Bouma and Wendy Giroux are here today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Chris Ballard: I'm delighted to welcome grade 5 students from my riding. The school is the St. Elizabeth Seton Catholic School. Welcome here.

Mr. Ted Arnott: I, too, wish to welcome representatives from the Ontario Real Estate Association who are here representing our great riding of Wellington—Halton Hills.

Mr. Grant Crack: Good morning. I'm pleased to rise today to welcome Mark Brock, who is the chair of the Grain Farmers of Ontario.

On behalf of Minister Leal, I would like to invite all caucus and staff from all three parties to join us at a special reception hosted by the grain farmers, to take place this evening in committee room 230 at 5 p.m. to celebrate 150 years of grain farming here in Ontario. Hope to see you there.

Mr. Jim Wilson: I'd like to welcome to Queen's Park today Corporal Kylie Peterson from CFB Borden. Corporal Peterson has been granted leave for the day to watch the proceedings in order to complete a class she is taking. On behalf of all members of the Legislature, I would like to welcome her and thank Corporal Peterson for her service to our country.

Hon. Michael Coteau: I'd like to ask members to join me in welcoming the students of Bayview Glen in the west gallery today. They're incredible students, and I look forward to seeing them at their school on Friday. Welcome to the Legislature.

Mr. Grant Crack: I would be remiss if I didn't wish my seatmate a very happy birthday today. She won't tell me how old she is; I can only guess.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Happy birthday.

Hon. David Zimmer: Today Olivia McCormick, whose parents are constituents in Willowdale, is the page captain. Olivia is here with her mother, Carmelina, and her sister Norah.

1040

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for Ajax—Pickering.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I said your riding.

Mr. Joe Dickson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to mention this morning that page captain Emma Fischer's father, David Fischer, is here in the audience. We welcome him back one more time.

I should correct myself at the same time: The gentleman who is chair of the Catholic board has been that for 26 years.

EARTHQUAKE VICTIMS

Hon. Reza Moridi: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Carry on.

Hon. Reza Moridi: Mr. Speaker, I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent to observe a moment of silence before question period as a sign of this House's condolences for the victims of the devastating earthquake in Iran and Iraq this past week.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Are we finished with introductions? Seeing that we're finished with introductions, the minister is seeking unanimous consent for a moment of silence for those who have perished and suffered under the earthquake. Do we agree? Agreed.

I would ask all people to please rise in respect for a moment of silence.

The House observed a moment's silence.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): May God rest their souls. Thank you.

I would also like to thank real estate agents from the riding of Brant for joining us. I appreciate their input.

REPORT, FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICER

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that the following document was tabled: a report on the nuclear refurbishment plan from the Financial Accountability Office of Ontario.

ORAL QUESTIONS

ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. Todd Smith: My question this morning is for the Premier. Research completed by the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers really shines a light on the mismanagement of Ontario's electricity system. They pored over data issued by the Independent Electricity System Operator and the Ontario Energy Board.

What was revealed was wildly disappointing. It showed that the province exported electricity at a net financial loss of up to \$1.25 billion—with a "b." That's \$1.25 billion.

Mr. Speaker, yes or no, will the Premier confirm: Did the Liberal government lose almost \$1.25 billion exporting power?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, let's look at the facts. The fact is that all jurisdictions import and export electricity to the benefit of their ratepayers. That's actually how the system works. Ontario is no different, with the IESO estimating that electricity exports reduce costs for Ontarians by hundreds of millions of dollars—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): It sounds to me like I'm going to have to pick up where I left off, and I will.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Let me just reinforce that: that the IESO estimates that electricity exports reduce costs for Ontarians by hundreds of millions of dollars every year—so those are cost savings. This net benefit to Ontario was \$236 million last year. That's a net benefit to the people of Ontario because of taking part in importing and exporting electricity to the benefit of their ratepayers.

On top of regular trade, we also pursue firm agreements wherever it makes sense to ratepayers in the province. I know that the Minister of Energy will want to speak more to this in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Todd Smith: The government is saying that the experts, the engineers, are wrong, and they know better. This Liberal spin is ridiculous. It's like costing \$20 to make a pizza, selling eight slices at \$1 apiece and saying you're making money. It's ridiculous. It's absurd. You're not making money.

We just wanted the government to come clean here this morning and start to tell the truth on this—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Careful of how you word making an accusation.

Mr. Todd Smith: Okay, so sure, the government found an export partner, but OSPE's numbers here are staggering. The numbers from the engineers are staggering. We're subsidizing power for Michigan, New York and other neighbouring jurisdictions, and to make matters worse, they're poaching our jobs because they're taking our electricity at a low cost.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier admit that this government lost over \$1 billion exporting power?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: I'm very pleased to rise—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke will come to order. We're now in warnings. You got what you asked for.

Carry on.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: It is important to note that today Ontario is a net exporter of power. In 2016, the net benefit of those exports to ratepayers was \$236 million, as estimated by the independent system operator. These benefits translate into reduced costs to the ratepayers—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Leeds–Grenville is warned.

Finish.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: Since 2013, the net benefit of our exports has been over \$1 billion in savings to Ontario ratepayers. Before, back in the early 2000s, Ontario used to be an importer of electricity. What was the result? That was when our system was dependent on unreliable and expensive electricity from neighbouring jurisdictions, often forcing us to overpay for electricity. Now, Mr. Speaker, we're making money, and we're making sure

we put that back into the system to keep costs down for the ratepayers.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary?

Mr. Todd Smith: Mr. Speaker, this political spin is absurd. These numbers don't lie. They come from the engineers here in Ontario. In 2016, the province exported a total of 21.9 terawatt hours of electricity at a net financial loss of more than \$500 million. Most of this was clean, green energy, spilling over the dams at Niagara Falls and other hydroelectric facilities across the province.

The engineers noted that over the last few years, the total exports represent nearly enough electricity to power every home in Ontario for an entire year. That's the legacy of the mismanagement on the electricity file from the Liberal government.

Mr. Speaker, how can this government continue to gouge electricity customers at the same time they're exporting enough electricity, at a loss, to power every home in the province?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: I know that the member opposite used the word "legacy," so let's talk about their legacy when it comes to electricity. In 2002 and 2003, Ontario paid \$900 million to import electricity. From 1996 to 2003, overall installed—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Nepean—Carleton is warned.

Carry on.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: From 1996 to 2003, overall installed generation capacity fell 6%. That's like running Niagara Falls dry. At the same time, demand grew by 8%. That's their legacy.

Our legacy? Rebuilding a system, making it clean, making it reliable, and bringing forward the fair hydro plan, which makes it affordable. We'll continue to make sure that we keep the best interests of Ontario ratepayers in hand. They'll continue to misinform those ratepayers.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: You're going down, down, down.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): You'd better not make eye contact with me.

The member will withdraw.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: I'll withdraw.

ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. Todd Smith: Again my question is for the Premier. The bad-news stories on the electricity file come as fast as the water flows over Niagara Falls. The Ontario PCs believe in green, clean, renewable power. What we don't believe in is selling it to Michigan and New York at a loss.

Let's be a little more specific. We have great made-in-Ontario power: hydroelectric. But last year, the Liberals allowed 4.7 terawatt hours of hydroelectric power to be

wasted in Ontario, including the station at Niagara Falls. It's the equivalent of powering nearly 500,000 homes for a year. Mr. Speaker, how did the government mismanage the system so poorly that we're letting green hydro-electric power, made in Ontario, be shipped across the border at such a significant loss?

1050

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: Let's talk about what they're claiming, Mr. Speaker. They like to claim that power is wasted when water is spilled at hydroelectric generating stations. This just shows how little they know about the system. An advantage of our clean, reliable and flexible system that we have built is that we're able to procure energy on an as-needed basis. This means that we only use the electricity that is produced at the cheapest cost at that time. Any time a generator is not producing electricity, it is because there were cheaper options available at that time. This means that a hydro facility will generate power when it can offer it into the market at a low price, and it is not used when it offers too expensive power—

Interjections.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: Mr. Speaker—which begs the question, do the PCs really think we should be running these generators at a higher cost to Ontario ratepayers? Probably so. Maybe they'll do that this weekend when they come up with—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Todd Smith: Speaker, what we really need to do here is take the cookie jar off that minister's desk, because he has made a mockery of our electricity system in Ontario. It has made a complete mess of our Ontario electricity system.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Education is warned.

Mr. Todd Smith: Speaker, to make matters worse, I just want to reiterate that Ontario exported 21.9 terawatt hours of electricity at a net financial loss of up to \$1.25 billion. That number represents more than two million homes' worth of electricity that Ontario has sold to neighbouring jurisdictions for a price less than what it costs to produce.

What does the Premier say, what does the minister say to those two million electricity customers in Ontario who have to overpay so you can subsidize power to our neighbouring jurisdictions that are poaching our jobs at the same time?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: What do I say to all of the two million customers that he was talking about? They voted against reducing their rates by 25%. That's what I would say to them. They have no plan on actually helping them, Mr. Speaker, and we do.

When it comes to net benefits of the export system, every jurisdiction imports and exports electricity. We did so at the net benefit of \$236 million in 2016. We did the same in 2015, the same in 2014 and the same in 2013. Go back and talk about their legacy. They were importing

power at the cost of \$700 million a year and doing it at the same time when we actually saw our use increase 127% on coal.

We've actually shut down coal. When it comes to a legacy, we've got clean air, we've got a reliable system, and we're working on making this system more and more affordable. On that side of the House—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Final supplementary?

Mr. Todd Smith: Once again, Speaker, we have a Minister of Energy ignoring the advice of the experts in the energy sector for his own political spin, his own political messaging. If any other company or business sold their excess product at a loss of \$1.25 billion, do you know what would happen to them, Speaker? They'd be fired. They'd be out of a job immediately. There's no way they would keep their job, yet this government has the audacity to tell everyone how great they are. Everybody can see through this. They've made a mockery of our energy sector. This waste in the system deserves an apology.

Speaker, will the Premier apologize for signing energy contracts that we don't need and selling energy at a loss for up to \$1.25 billion at the same time?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: Again, let's look at the facts. The facts are—and they still matter in Ontario—\$236 million in net benefit to Ontario ratepayers, which since 2013 have been a net benefit of our exports of over \$1 billion in savings to Ontario ratepayers.

Let's talk about our trade with our electricity system. It's managed by experts, by our system experts, our system operator. It's the market that determines the price of electricity, and we only export electricity when the trade is of benefit to Ontario ratepayers.

Our government will continue to participate in the electricity market, increasing the reliability and the cost-effectiveness of our system. We'll continue to work with all of our partners, all of our neighbours, all of our system operators and the experts to make sure that we have the best—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.
New question.

COLLEGE STUDENTS

Ms. Peggy Sattler: My question is to the Premier. Yesterday, this Liberal government said students who decide to withdraw from college because of the strike will receive a full tuition refund. This has created confusion for students about whether they have to withdraw from college completely or just from the semester.

Students have lives outside of class. They may work full-time; they may have kids. They need to know whether getting a tuition refund and restarting the semester in January is an option.

Speaker, can this government assure college students that they can withdraw from the semester, get a full tuition refund and be guaranteed a fresh start in January?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Development.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Throughout the strike, I have spent time talking to student leaders, talking to students, understanding what issues they were facing. Getting a tuition refund was an important priority for students, and that's why I was very pleased to announce that students who withdraw as a result of the strike are entitled to a tuition refund.

Interjection: Very fair.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I think that's fair. In fact, it goes above and beyond what many considered to be fair.

To answer the member opposite's question: This applies to students who withdraw. They of course can come back. Not every college program has a January re-entry, so it will depend on the program and the college.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: For a student going to college anywhere in Ontario, but especially in Toronto, a \$500 hardship rebate doesn't even cover a month's rent. Add rent onto additional child care cost, lost hours of work, textbooks that may barely be used, penalties for cancelling flights home and the many other—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation is warned.

Finish, please.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: —and the many other out-of-pocket expenses that students have incurred in over the last five weeks, and \$500 becomes more of a joke than a solution for some students.

Why is this Premier not offering effective help for Ontario college students?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I have to say, this is a rather bizarre question coming from a party that rejected every opportunity to get students back to school more quickly. In fact, that's the party that said that if they had been in power, the strike would go on for as long as it took. So that's a pretty bizarre question, to now be concerned about students' expenses when last week they were not concerned about students one little bit.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Speaker, \$500 is not nearly enough to compensate students for what they have lost during the five-week strike. For some, cramming five weeks of missed content into two weeks is just not possible.

Imagine a busy working mom going to college part-time to get a better life, balancing kids and a 9 to 5 job. She hardly had enough time for course work before the five-week strike, and now, with the holidays approaching, the Premier is asking her to find even more time to cram five weeks of learning into two.

Instead of creating more confusion and chaos for students, why isn't this Liberal government offering a program that actually responds to the financial hardships, the personal realities and the emotional stress that students have experienced over the last five weeks?

1100

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I absolutely acknowledge the stress that students were experiencing during the strike and will continue to. We are very happy students are back at work today and we are stepping up to support them as they do complete their semester.

So, Speaker, every college has established a dedicated fund to support students for additional costs that they incur as a result of the strike; for many students, those courses will go into January. There will be additional costs borne by students, and this fund has been established. In certain circumstances, colleges have discretion to grant more than that.

In addition, for students currently receiving OSAP, OSAP will be extended to help them if the course goes longer—if the program goes longer into January. Thirdly, we very much want to support students to complete their semester, but those who choose to withdraw will have a full tuition refund.

LABOUR DISPUTE

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Again to the Premier: Despite her minister's assertions, it is the Premier's inaction that prolonged this strike for five weeks. Last night she told students who were angry that she did not get involved sooner, that "she was acting on advice that she was given."

Well, I'm not sure where the Premier gets her advice, but sections 4 and 5 of the Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology Act give the Premier every right to involve herself in college business if it's in the public interest.

Maybe the Premier can tell us: What was it about a five-week strike coming to a fair resolution that wasn't in the public interest?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Development.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Well, Speaker, it's interesting that the NDP is continuing to refer to that section of legislation. What they have failed to understand is there is another piece of legislation that overrides that, that does not allow government to interfere with the collective bargaining process—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Finish, please.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Once it became clear that the parties could not reach an agreement, that they were at a deadlock, Speaker, we did commit to act. We used every opportunity to quickly pass legislation that would get students back in the classroom, but the NDP blocked it every single time they had the opportunity. On Thursday, we sought unanimous consent to introduce legislation; that was denied by the NDP. On Friday, we introduced legislation, and then required unanimous consent to debate the legislation the same day. Again the NDP blocked the motion over and over; they repeatedly—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Supplementary?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: The Premier also told students last night that she will be looking into whether or not she had the authority to intervene earlier. Let me spell this out for the Premier: Section 4 of the Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology Act allows the minister to make binding directives to Ontario colleges as to how they conduct their affairs. Section 5 of the act allows the minister to intervene in the affairs of colleges if it's deemed to be in the public interest. I find it hard to believe that neither the Premier nor her minister knew that they had this authority.

Why didn't the Premier exercise her legislated authority and direct the colleges not to force a contract vote that everyone knew they would lose, unnecessarily prolonging this strike for as much as two weeks?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Minister?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Well, Speaker, as I said earlier, there is overriding legislation. We had very solid legal advice that the order would have been challenged had we moved the back-to-work legislation too early.

But let's be really clear what this is all about. The NDP are hearing from people that they are not happy that the NDP blocked the legislation, and they are—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Finish, please.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, I will finish up by saying that the Colleges Collective Bargaining Act does not equal the Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology Act. There are two pieces of legislation. The NDP should be aware of that, and they should understand that we pushed as hard as we could.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Last night at the Premier's town hall, students were upset. Some were in tears as they described the effect that this five-week strike has had on their learning. Instead of comforting these students, the Premier defended her decision not to intervene. She said, "I had an understanding of what" my authority was, "and I"—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. The member from Trinity-Spadina is warned.

You may finish.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: She said, "I had an understanding of what" my authority was, "and I acted in good faith on that." These are empty words for a young person in tears trying to figure out how to recover from five weeks of uncertainty.

Again I ask: Why did the Premier not use her legislative authority to order the colleges to reduce the number of precariously employed faculty early in negotiations, thereby removing one of the most significant issues that led to the strike in the first place?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that no one, no Premier ever in the history of this province, has cared more about students than our Premier,

Kathleen Wynne. It is thanks to this Premier that one half of college students have free tuition—210,000 students, who say thank you to this Premier for ensuring they have free tuition.

We are committed to students. We are committed to equity of access to post-secondary education for people across the province. We have 50,000 more students applying for OSAP this year than last year, thanks to this Premier and her concern for students.

COLLEGE STUDENTS

Mr. Lorne Coe: My question is for the Premier. After the Liberal government allowed the college strike to drag on for five weeks, 500,000 community college students are finally returning to their classrooms today.

Yesterday, I asked the Premier if the Liberal government would commit to matching the college student support fund dollar for dollar. As expected, the Premier did not provide an answer.

Because the Premier failed to show leadership for five weeks during the strike, 500,000 college students at the very least deserve a concrete answer. Will the government commit today to matching the college student support fund dollar for dollar?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Development.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Well, Speaker, of course we all understand that the PCs' protection of collective bargaining is weak, to say the least. We let the process play out; we engaged ourselves as we could to try to find a resolution. One of those things is that we're setting up a task force to look at some of the big issues facing the future of our colleges.

We have really listened to the voice of students, and I want to say thank you to the students who took the time to work with government to identify issues that students were facing and to help us develop those solutions.

Let me repeat, Speaker: We have got a dedicated fund for hardship, and the colleges have discretion to go above the \$500 cap in exceptional circumstances.

Students who choose to withdraw will have their tuitions refunded, if they choose to withdraw as a result of this strike. In addition, students who are on OSAP will be able to get additional support if the semester goes long.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary?

Mr. Lorne Coe: Back to the Premier: For five weeks, the Premier let the strike drag on. Students weren't in class and were put through immeasurable financial stress, some forced to sell their personal belongings to make ends meet.

It's time for the Liberal government to finally stand up for students and take tangible action to address their financial hardships.

Will the Premier do the right thing today and commit to matching the \$500-per-student support fund dollar for dollar?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Minister?

1110

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, I'm happy to see that the PCs are standing up for students, but I have to ask the question: Where were they when we made the changes to OSAP—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Niagara West—Glanbrook is warned.

Finish, please.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Where were the PCs when we made the changes to OSAP that expand access to people from all income groups in this province? Where were they when we found a way to get free tuition to 210,000 students? The sad reality is that they voted against it. They voted against it. They weren't there for students; they weren't there for changes to OSAP that have made Ontario an international leader in student financial assistance.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. New question? The member from Toronto—Danforth.

Interjections.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: We're a very eager and energetic group here, Speaker, as you're well aware.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Speaker, to the Premier: Yesterday, I was listening to the Minister of Energy respond to questions about Hydro One's two rate increase applications. The minister praised Hydro One for finding savings, but Hydro One is not passing any savings on to ratepayers by decreasing rates. Instead, Hydro One wants a 20% distribution rate increase.

The minister said Hydro One is "doing a great job as a company," even though Hydro One is currently taking the Ontario Energy Board to court in order to keep 100% of a \$2.6-billion tax break that rightly belongs to ratepayers.

Why does the minister think his job is to praise Hydro One and not to defend the interests of ratepayers?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: We were very pleased to bring forward the fair hydro plan, which actually defended ratepayers by reducing their bills by 25%. That member and that party voted against it. It's this party that is actually defending ratepayers. It's this party that's actually working with companies to make sure that we can continue to find ways to reduce bills for ratepayers.

When it comes to Hydro One, in R2 and R1 designations, they've seen their bills drop by 40% to 50%—and it had nothing to do with that party; it had nothing to do with that member. It had to do with the company, the government and ratepayers all working together to come up with solutions.

That's what we have done on this side. On that side, they've done nothing. They have a plan that is pie in the sky, that didn't even talk about helping low-income individuals, and that is something that we have done with all organizations to help all ratepayers in this province.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Again to the Premier: The Minister of Energy cheered when Hydro One applied to buy Avista, even though this \$6.7-billion purchase will do nothing to improve service for Ontario ratepayers. This purchase will divert resources away from improving the reliability of the grid toward the cost of building an empire for Hydro One.

The Ontario Energy Board said Hydro One was making poor use of its existing funds for capital improvements and told it to reduce its revenue requirements. Hydro One basically refused.

The privatized Hydro One is putting private profits ahead of the public interest. Will the minister stop cheer-leading for Hydro One and start protecting the interests of Ontario families and ratepayers?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: Again, it's this party that actually protected ratepayers by bringing forward the fair hydro plan. It's that party that voted against ratepayers by making sure they didn't support the plan.

When it comes to Hydro One, the acquisition of Avista benefits customers, employees, shareholders and ratepayers. It's important to say rates will not be impacted. It won't even affect local jobs.

Similar acquisitions are increasingly common. Fortis purchased Michigan-based ITC and EPCOR purchased two US water utilities.

When it comes to making sure that the government is on the side of the ratepayers, it's this Premier, it's this government that will continue to work with our stakeholders, will continue to work with the OEB, will continue to work with the IESO to have a clean, reliable and affordable system, unlike the opposition parties that have no plan to do that.

NUCLEAR POWER FACILITIES

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: My question is also to the Minister of Energy. Minister, in my riding, I often hear from constituents on the work of this government on the energy file. The constituents in my riding know how critical a clean and reliable energy system is to Ontario being a great place to live and work.

Refurbishing the Darlington and Bruce nuclear generating stations will ensure that we have affordable, reliable and clean energy for years to come. However, my constituents sometimes worry that the projects may go over the set-out budget or will be delayed.

Today, the Financial Accountability Officer released a report about the province's refurbishment project. Could the minister please update the House and my constituents on how the refurbishment project is going?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: I want to thank the member for that question and, of course, for the hard work that he does each and every day for his constituents and his riding.

I also want to thank the Financial Accountability Office for providing their important analysis of the refurbishment project. The FAO report confirms that our government has carefully considered the financial risks

of nuclear refurbishments and has built in strong protections and oversight measures to prevent cost overruns.

The FAO report also makes it clear that there is currently no alternative clean generation which could replace nuclear generation at a comparable cost for Ontario ratepayers.

Additionally, the report notes that refurbishment is the most cost-effective, low-emissions generation source available to meet Ontario's baseload requirements.

Mr. Speaker, I want to reassure the member and his constituents that the refurbishment of our nuclear fleet remains on budget and on time.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Thank you, Minister. Not only will the refurbishment of Ontario's nuclear fleet ensure we have safe, reliable, clean energy where and when we need it; it will also bring our province and our communities, like mine in Northumberland-Quinte West, significant economic benefits.

When it comes to providing a boost to Ontario's growing economy, the refurbishments at Bruce and Darlington will support Ontario's globally recognized nuclear supply chain, with more than 180 companies and 70,000 jobs across the province. This will have a significant positive impact in my riding of Northumberland-Quinte West, being just adjacent to Darlington.

A few weeks ago, our government released our 2017 long-term energy plan in which we committed to a major mandate letter objective: namely, refurbishing 10 nuclear units in Ontario—both Darlington and Bruce. Minister, what measures are we taking to ensure this project remains on time and on budget?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: In order to prevent cost or schedule overruns, our government has implemented strong protections and oversight measures.

Bruce Power has invested approximately \$13 billion of its own funds and has agreed to take the full risk of cost overruns on refurbishment of their nuclear units.

The unit 2 refurbishment at Darlington is progressing very well and is on track to be completed on time and on budget.

In any case, the government has established off-ramps that may be used in the event of OPG or Bruce Power failing to adhere to the approved schedule and budget. We've been very clear, Mr. Speaker, that we will not proceed if there are significant cost or schedule overruns.

While we continue to monitor these two projects, nuclear power will continue to be the backbone of the safe, clean, reliable and affordable electricity system we've built here in Ontario.

PHARMACARE

Mr. Jeff Yurek: My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Yesterday, during committee, the member from Kitchener Centre announced that the drug for cystic fibrosis, Orkambi, would be covered under OHIP+, even though there haven't been any negotiations for the drug at the pan-Canadian Pharmaceutical Alliance in two years.

Speaker, this government and its members continue to make announcements about OHIP+, giving hope to many who are suffering from rare diseases and cancer. Unfortunately, those statements aren't always correct.

Can the minister confirm right now if Orkambi will be covered under OHIP+? Or did the member from Kitchener Centre mislead the committee?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Excuse me.

The member will withdraw.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to stand up and talk about OHIP+. By now, I think most Ontarians understand that come January 1 every single Ontarian, up to their 25th birthday, preceding their 25th birthday, will have access, absolutely free of charge, to more than 4,400 medications; medications like insulin, EpiPens, puffers for those with asthma and cancer drugs. 1120

In fact, I was with the Canadian Cancer Society yesterday, and I was with the Canadian Organization for Rare Diseases, CORD, yesterday as well, to talk about the availability for the first time of free-of-charge cancer drugs for children and drugs for rare diseases. This is an incredible advancement and expansion of medicare in this province, one that I think we all should be very proud of.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Again, there was no direct answer to my question. But, Speaker, when you write policy on the back of a napkin, statements like those made from Kitchener Centre appear to happen. Either the government has no idea what will be covered under their plan, or they're promising drugs they know will not be covered in an effort to gain support.

Speaker, will the minister stop stringing the people of Ontario along and admit right now that their back-of-the-napkin OHIP+ plan will cover nothing new, nothing more than what's covered for the seniors, nothing more than what's covered for the Trillium patients of Ontario?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I hope what the member is saying is not that he opposes the biggest expansion of medicare in this province's history since medicare itself: 4,400 drugs will be available.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: He's a pharmacist. You're a pharmacist. You know about this.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Particularly given his professional background.

We're working with pharmacists. We're working with pharma companies—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'll accept that.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: We're working with important stakeholders like the Canadian Cancer Society, with pediatricians across this province, with specialists in adolescent diseases and illnesses. There will be 4,400 drugs available. There is no upfront payment, no copayment, no

annual deductible; all you need is your prescription and your health number, and 4,400 drugs will be available.

If the member opposite can't support that, I'm deeply concerned about how he approaches health care in this province.

CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Miss Monique Taylor: My question is for the Premier. A report released last week by Children's Mental Health Ontario outlines the serious problems caused by wait-lists of up to 18 months for mental health services for children and youth. The media reported that Shannon Nagy told her mother at five years old that she wanted to die. In grade 6, she missed the entire school year. Now 20, Shannon says her struggle to get help throughout her childhood did more harm than good.

Kim Moran, now the CEO of CMHO, had to take a four-month leave of absence and then work part-time when her 11-year-old daughter tried to die by suicide while waiting on a year-long list for help. When will the Liberal government finally act to significantly reduce wait-lists?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Children and Youth Services.

Hon. Michael Coteau: I'd like to thank the member for the question. Mental health, when it comes to young people here in the province of Ontario, is a huge priority for this Premier, this government and the Minister of Health.

A few years ago, we invested \$100 million into mental health here in the province of Ontario, and as we made that investment, we also started another process called Moving on Mental Health. What we've been able to accomplish over the last few years is quite remarkable. We're really rethinking the entire system here in the province of Ontario. We've set up 31, almost 32, of the 33 lead agencies across the province of Ontario to better coordinate services on the ground.

This is about system transformation—the same thing we've done in education, the same thing we've done in health care, and the same thing we've done in the energy sector. This is a system transformation. I assured members that I met last week at the conference that we are looking for massive system change here.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Miss Monique Taylor: The minister knows that everything he just talked about did nothing to do anything to reduce the wait-lists. Children's Mental Health Ontario has been saying for years that the underfunding of services is putting a huge strain on our hospitals because these kids have nothing else, and they reach crisis situations.

Last week's report shows the impact 18-month wait-lists have on education and on the ability of families to be able to continue to earn a living. One third of parents have had their child miss school due to anxiety. A quarter have missed work to care for their child. The stress con-

tinues to mount up and adds to already very difficult situations.

I ask again: When will this government act, so that children with mental health problems can get the help they need when they need it?

Hon. Michael Coteau: The reason we are looking for a system change is to make sure that young children get the help when they need it.

The member says that we're not doing anything to address the issue. I'll let the member know that, as a province, we've invested almost \$4 billion in mental health. Almost half a billion of those dollars goes to help young people here in the province of Ontario. Currently in the province there are 130,000 young people getting services.

The member says we've done nothing. Well, here are a few things that we've done in the last few years. We provided funding for mental health leaders in all 72 school boards, and provided funding to hire an additional 770 community mental health workers across the province of Ontario, 144 additional nurses working in schools to identify students who need help and more than 80 new mental health workers and addiction workers working in indigenous communities. We've also expanded our online mental health directory.

We set up Bill 89 here in the province of Ontario, which the Progressive Conservatives voted against, to do exactly what we are doing: system change.

FINANCIAL LITERACY

Mrs. Cristina Martins: My question is for the Minister of Education. November is Financial Literacy Month. Financial literacy is an important part of learning and living in the 21st century. Being financially literate ensures that we know what is happening with the finances in our homes so that we can plan for the future and weather any unexpected expenses.

During this Financial Literacy Month, our government is taking action to ensure that students in Ontario can develop a solid foundation of financial literacy skills. This means having the knowledge to make informed financial decisions with confidence and care.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister: How is our government revamping the curriculum to further the development of financial literacy skills in Ontario's schools?

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: I'm pleased to rise in the House today to recognize November as Financial Literacy Month. This is a life skill that everyone can benefit from.

Our government is committed to preparing students for success in a rapidly changing economy and a technology-driven world. Earlier this November, I was at Parkdale Collegiate Institute in Toronto to announce that we are making financial literacy a mandatory part of the grade 10 careers course, starting in September 2018.

We know that our young people are better off when they can understand basic money management, budgeting or credit. Our plan for education is preparing Ontario students for the jobs of today and tomorrow. This is an important part of our plan to create jobs and grow the economy, and of our renewed vision for education. We

remain committed to achievement, equity and well-being for all students in Ontario, including financial well-being.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Cristina Martins: Thank you, Minister. Financial literacy is a skill that is vital to the success of our students. Our government is doing more to equip students with the skills they need to compete in an integrated global economy. We have never wavered in our commitment to student achievement.

Just this year we launched 29 pilot projects across the province to inform the recently announced enhancements to the career studies course. During the pilot projects, education partners participated in the process, providing important input about new mandatory learning on financial literacy.

Minister, can you tell us more about how the new and improved careers studies course will prepare grade 10 students with financial literacy skills?

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: I want to thank the member from Davenport for this very timely question.

Students and teachers felt that the pilots were so successful that we will be expanding the new careers course to all schools across the province, starting in 2018. We will be refreshing the careers course to include:

—budgeting, so students can map out their pathways plan and then itemize its components to create a personal budget;

—credit, so students can explore issues related to credit card debt and collaborate on suggested solutions for acceptable use; and

—OSAP, so students can use the new OSAP calculator tool to plan for post-secondary education.

Ontario students are among the top performers worldwide in financial literacy education, but we are not stopping there. We're making this a mandatory part of Ontario's curriculum. We remain committed to investing in our most valuable resource: our students.

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INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: My question is for the Premier. Speaker, this weekend the Premier will be heading to Asia on a trip to China and Vietnam. It was in Vietnam where, under two weeks ago, the Prime Minister failed to show up at a meeting with 10 other world leaders and jeopardized Canada's position in the Trans-Pacific Partnership negotiations.

Given how important the TPP will be for Canadian agriculture, including Ontario's grain farmers, has the Premier raised concerns with the Prime Minister over what has been interpreted by other TPP nations as a snub at the APEC summit?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: On the second part of that question, I would just assure the member opposite that we are in regular communication with and work very closely with our federal counterparts on all of the trade negotiations, as we did on CETA, as we are doing on NAFTA and as we are doing on the TPP conversation.

As the member opposite will know, none of those provisions have been finalized, and we will continue to work very closely with the federal government.

I will say to the member opposite that I'm very pleased to be able to take about 100 companies with us to China and Vietnam, companies that want to develop partnerships that will mean more jobs in Ontario and more investment in Ontario which will, again, continue to help our economy to grow.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: The Premier actually has totally lost the point of my question, and that is that the TPP—I agree—presents a great opportunity for Ontario's agriculture sector to break into new markets. The Premier's government website advertises her upcoming trade mission directly and references Ontario's and Vietnam's participation in the TPP as a key business tie.

So I have to ask the Premier: Why is she not pushing back at the Prime Minister to get the TPP talks back on track so that Ontario farmers and agri-food businesses will not miss out on a tremendous market opportunity?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The TPP talks are on track. We're very pleased that there was a preliminary agreement in principle, and we will work very closely with the federal government.

As we have done and as we are doing now in the NAFTA conversations, I'm acutely aware of two things. First of all, the opportunities for markets and the expansion of markets: That's why I am travelling with companies to China and to Vietnam. It's why I'm so engaged with businesses here to make sure that they understand what the opportunities are abroad. Second is to make sure that in these trade negotiations, in these conversations, we protect our industries, that we protect and stand up for workers here in Ontario and make sure that when there is a negotiation of a trade deal, Ontario and Ontario's workers benefit.

DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour la première ministre. Sudbury has waited eight long years for a PET scanner. In December 2015, this government promised to change that. Our community raised the money. We did our work; we've done our part. Actually, the first PET scan in Sudbury should have been happening right now, but instead we've learned that this government is holding up the process. It could be 2019 before PET scans are done in Sudbury. Why is this Premier letting us down again? Why is she delaying the PET scanner that we should have had eight long years ago?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: First of all, I would like to thank the MPP for Sudbury for his strong advocacy for both his community and for northern Ontario, because it was his hard work that resulted in the government providing two sources of funding for the PET scanner.

We announced \$1.6 million in annual operating costs for the PET scanner once it's fully operational, but that

wasn't sufficient because we were, quite frankly, overwhelmed by the level of community support and the fundraising coming forward on the capital side. We wanted to make sure that those capital improvements necessary for the PET scanner were able to proceed. Again, with the support and hard work from the MPP for Sudbury, we were able to make a substantial capital investment—in the millions of dollars—towards that purchase and towards the necessary capital improvements.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Speaker, the good people of the northeast have been calling for equity of access to PET scanning technology since 2009. The Sam Bruno family—Cheryl, Frank, Mary, Lori and Sam's mother, Rosina—a grieving family that knew nothing about fundraising, went on and raised \$4.1 million to purchase the scanner. Health Sciences North has done everything that they need to do, but today, my constituents still can't get a PET scan done in Sudbury. We still have to drive five, six, seven, eight hours on icy roads to get the health care we need.

Frankly, we feel like this government never took that problem seriously and now news of more delays just adds to the disappointment toward this Premier and the government. How can the Premier defend another year of delays for us to get access to PET scanning technology?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Again, thanks to the hard work of the local MPP, the MPP from Sudbury, we have made the multi-million dollar capital investment; the operating funds as well; the PET scan. The people of Sudbury and the surrounding area will not have to wait much longer. We're working with the hospital, the Bruno family and the community supports that are in place. This project is on track, will open as expected, Mr. Speaker, and provide that important service so that hundreds of individuals from Sudbury and the surrounding region in the north will no longer have to travel to take advantage of PET scan technology.

I want to again congratulate and thank the MPP for Sudbury for his excellent advocacy and hard work for many years on this project.

APPOINTMENT OF CHIEF SCIENTIST

Mr. Arthur Potts: My question is to the Minister of Research, Innovation and Science. Just last week, I understand the minister made a very significant announcement at a completely sold-out Canadian Club event. Quite clearly, the people want to hear this PhD and physicist speak. That announcement was regarding the Chief Scientist file that he was tasked with in his mandate letter from the Premier. I understand, Speaker, that the objective was to create an office and a position that would be responsible for helping coordinate Ontario's significant science and research assets. The officer would advise the Premier and the minister on key scientific matters and raise the profile of science and government policy. Could the minister please inform the members of this House of his work on the Chief Scientist file?

Hon. Reza Moridi: I want to begin by thanking the member for Beaches–East York not only for his question, but also for his advocacy for science, research and innovation, a file which I'm particularly proud of.

On November 17, I was at the Canadian Club delivering a speech on the role of science in the formation of public policy, a subject I am quite passionate about. It was there that I was able to announce the appointment of Dr. Molly Shoichet as Ontario's first Chief Scientist. Dr. Shoichet is a professor at the University of Toronto and an internationally respected and award-winning expert in the study of polymers for drug delivery and tissue regeneration. Mr. Speaker, over the next months Dr. Shoichet will help Ontario develop a strategic scientific research agenda.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Arthur Potts: I thank the minister. His mandate was very clear and he very clearly has fulfilled his mandate.

I too would like to offer my personal congratulations to Dr. Shoichet. I am extremely pleased and delighted with this bit of news because our government will now be placing much greater emphasis on science in the formation of all of its policy decisions. I know it gives the residents of my riding of Beaches–East York great peace of mind to know that this government will make responsible and well-reasoned decisions based on the advice of experts in their field.

To the minister: Could he tell the members of the Legislature what the responsibilities of the Chief Scientist will be?

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Hon. Reza Moridi: Again, thank you to the member from Beaches–East York.

Part of the Chief Scientist's responsibilities will be providing expert advice to government to help decision-makers tackle some of the greatest challenges that our time and our society is facing—challenges like climate change, an aging population, fighting deadly diseases, and the impact of transformative technologies.

It is my pleasure to congratulate Dr. Molly Shoichet for becoming Ontario's first Chief Scientist. She will help us continue a proud tradition of science and research excellence through evidence-based decision-making.

To all my colleagues in the House: Please reach out to Dr. Shoichet and wish her well on her appointment.

DOCTOR SHORTAGE

Mr. Bill Walker: My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Life is getting harder for Ontario patients as they're waiting longer and longer for the care they need. The number of patients without a doctor continues to rise in my riding. Today, over 2,100 people are wait-listed for a doctor in Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, a 62% increase over last year.

Not only is this a break of your election promise, when Kathleen Wynne guaranteed all Ontarians access to doctors by 2018, but it is actually a deplorable record.

Minister, I want to know, is matching Ontarians with a doctor going to be another Liberal stretch goal or yet another hollow promise?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I'm proud that 95% of Ontarians have access to a primary care provider, be that a family doctor or a nurse practitioner in one of our 25 nurse practitioner-led clinics. In fact, since we came into office—I wish I had the exact number—well over 6,000 new physicians are practising in this province. In fact, I believe we average between 600 and 800 net new doctors entering practice each year in this province.

That being said, there's no question that there are parts of the province where we do not have an adequate supply of the relevant health care providers, including our front-line primary care providers and physicians, and we're working hard on that. We're working on that in a variety of ways with local municipalities. We're providing incentives and opportunities for physicians to open the various types of family health organizations and other modalities to increase the usage.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Bill Walker: Back to the Minister of Health: With all due respect, Minister, you should not be proud until it's 100%. Health care is fundamental to everybody.

Patricia Russell-Caplan is among the 2,168 constituents who are on an ever-growing wait-list for a primary care physician in my riding. Patricia also suffers from amyotrophic lateral sclerosis—or ALS—a fatal neuro-degenerative disease, so her access to a doctor is absolutely critical.

I don't know how many years you would feel comfortable waiting if you were facing a similar predicament. I ask, through you, Mr. Speaker: Minister, what is fair about ALS patients like Patricia going two years without a doctor, while you waste \$4 billion on a hydro accounting scheme?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Well, that's rich coming from a party that closed 10,000 hospital beds, closed more than two dozen hospitals and referred to our nurses as hula hoops going out of fashion, out of style.

But we have increased, in this province, the ratio of physicians for every 10,000 Ontarians. It's increased from 17.5 physicians per 10,000 Ontarians to 20.5 physicians per 10,000 Ontarians.

We have dramatically increased the percentage of Ontarians who have access to a family doctor, a primary care provider, a nurse practitioner—and we're not done yet. We agree that 95% isn't sufficient. We're going to reach that point where every single Ontarian who wants a primary care provider—be that a doctor, be that a nurse practitioner—will have access to that individual. Even more so, our Patients First Act spoke directly to this issue to make sure that we would attain that goal.

CORRECTION OF RECORD

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister of Energy on a point of order.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: On a point of order: I would like to correct my record. In response to the member

from Prince Edward–Hastings, I said, in relation to the PCs' imports of power, that they spent \$700 million on electricity costs. That was incorrect, Mr. Speaker. I meant to say \$900 million in 2002 and 2003.

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member from Elgin–Middlesex–London has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question given by the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care concerning coverage of Orkambi under OHIP+. The matter will be discussed today at 6 p.m.

There being no deferred votes, this Houses stands recessed until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed 1145 to 1500.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

WIND TURBINES

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I rise today to express my concerns and the concerns of people like the Pentland family, the Blacks, the Stachuras, the Groves, David Martin, Kevin Hall and Greg Schmalz. We want to share our concerns about our dissatisfaction with the continued inaction of this government to address the negative impacts that industrial wind turbine infrasound is having on communities.

In April, the former Minister of the Environment and Climate Change said, "No one should have to suffer noise or noise pollution from any source, and certainly not wind turbines in their community." But before he could visit Huron–Bruce, he resigned.

I have since invited the new environment minister on numerous occasions to visit with these people and see first-hand what they are living with. The Ministry of the Environment is not responding appropriately either.

We have people like Joan Black, who wrote to me and said that she gets "tired of complaining as apparently no one cares and they seem not willing to stop [the] noise." Patti Keller and Doug Ducharme just recently said—and I have to share with you that Doug's eyesight has been affected—that they are feeling unsafe and unwell in their homes as they're surrounded with three monstrosities.

In closing, Speaker, on public record and for the fourth time, I would like to invite the environment minister to Huron–Bruce to meet with these people and learn more about what they are living with, so maybe he could do something.

PRECARIOUS EMPLOYMENT

Ms. Cindy Forster: I was deeply troubled to hear of yet more layoffs by Bell Media across Canada, with jobs being cut at TV and radio stations, including HTZ-FM in St. Catharines.

It is heartbreaking for employees and their families to be put through this so close to Christmas. Bell Media did exactly the same thing a year ago, affecting nearly 400 employees across the country.

Now, Bell calls it restructuring due to challenges in the media industry, yet only workers pay the price, while executive salaries and retention bonuses increase unchallenged. One that was actually reported: a \$900,000 bonus last year in addition to a \$1-million salary.

Job insecurity, inadequate wages—this precarious employment seems to be the story in many industries these days. In fact, the Liberal federal finance minister, Bill Morneau, has suggested that young Canadians should just "get used" to precarious employment. It is clear that Kathleen Wynne's Liberals agree with their federal colleagues based on their recent inability or unwillingness to address precarious work for Ontario's college faculty.

Mr. Speaker, it is time this government prioritizes Ontarians over re-election. It is time they stopped ignoring the growing job insecurity in this province and in this country, and it's time for a plan to help our young people so they never have to get used to precarious work.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Mr. Han Dong: I rise today to speak about a very important issue, and it involves students, actually. On Friday, November 17, the Toronto Star wrote about scams targeting Chinese international students. These scams involved phone calls to students claiming that they are under criminal investigation and must not have conversations with anyone other than the scammers. After phoning the students, these scammers phoned their families in China asking for ransom money. I raise this issue in the House today to bring awareness to this very vulnerable portion of our population: international students.

Since 2010, international student enrolment increased by 88.5% in Ontario universities. Today, we have over 100,000 international students in our 45 post-secondary institutions. Their economic impact on Ontario is undeniable. Each year, they bring over \$11 billion to Canada, and \$5.4 billion is spent in this province.

International students bring so much to our communities and institutions. They enrich the lives of our domestic students and their learning experiences, but we must do more to make their stay in Ontario safer and fruitful.

These scams hurt Ontario's reputation as one of the safest and most welcoming destinations for international students from around the world.

I urge all members to work to together to defend Ontario's reputation by protecting these future ambassadors and potential citizens of our great province.

CALEDON PARENT-CHILD CENTRE

Ms. Sylvia Jones: On November 27, the Caledon Parent-Child Centre will hold an open house to mark 30 years in Caledon. Under the leadership of executive

director Teresa Colasanti, dedicated staff and committed volunteers have been helping families in Caledon for 30 years.

Caledon Parent-Child Centre provides a variety of programs and supports for families in the Caledon area, including family time drop-in sessions; prenatal, post-natal and child development programs; and assistance and support for children with special learning needs and their families.

Trust me, Speaker, I know that parenting isn't always easy. I'm proud to live in a community where such dedicated volunteers and staff strive every day to help their neighbours be better parents.

Caledon Parent-Child Centre is supported by charitable donations and the efforts of volunteers, its volunteer board of directors, and staff like Ailsa Stanners-Moroz, who has been with Caledon Parent-Child Centre for 30 years, its entire existence.

On behalf of the hundreds of families who have benefitted from Caledon Parent-Child Centre, thank you and congratulations.

MARY JOHNSTON

Ms. Catherine Fife: This summer, Waterloo region lost an education champion and leader, Mary Johnston. As a community, we were fortunate to have Mary take a leadership role on so many issues. In many ways, she was a pioneer for women education leaders in Waterloo region, breaking down traditional barriers with her trademark smile, laugh and tenacity. She was a mentor to many.

Mary served as a teacher, vice-principal and principal in schools across Waterloo. There is now an amazing school named after her—the Mary Johnston Public School—an honour she received upon her retirement.

When she began teaching in 1950, it was in a one-room schoolhouse on Bearinger Road. By 1978, she was selected as an outstanding educator in Ontario.

Mary was active in the federation of women teachers of Ontario, in OTF and ETFO. She was also the recipient of the Queen's silver, golden and diamond anniversary medals.

I can say from personal experience that when Mary Johnston was in your corner, you felt supported at all times. I miss the days when she would cut out my trustee comments from a local newspaper and mail them to me, just like my grandmother used to do.

Mary seemed happiest with children. Watching her interact with the students in her namesake school will stay with me always.

I feel incredibly blessed to have known her and to have called her a friend.

Mary loved education and will be missed by all who knew her and learned from her. Hers was a life well lived.

DIABETES

Mr. John Fraser: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge November as Diabetes Awareness Month.

One in three Canadians are living with diabetes or prediabetes, and every three minutes another Canadian is diagnosed with diabetes.

Diabetes is a chronic disease where the body either cannot produce insulin properly or properly use the insulin produced.

Diabetes Awareness Month helps shine a spotlight on the disease and treatment options and helps people reduce their risk of developing type 2 diabetes.

I would encourage everyone to visit diabetestest.ca to take the online Canrisk quiz where you can learn your risk level of developing type 2 diabetes.

Regular exercise and eating a healthy diet will dramatically prevent or delay the onset of type 2 diabetes.

Over the last 100 years, there has been dramatic research advancement resulting in the treatment and management of those living with the disease. Of course, Speaker, the invention of insulin was here in Toronto, some 96 years ago, by Frederick Banting.

People with diabetes can expect to live active, independent lives if it's carefully managed. However, there is more work to be done to help prevent this disease and improve the lives of those living with it. Visit diabetes.ca to learn more.

CONSIDERATION OF BILL 174

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Last February, I tabled a private member's bill, Bill 94, to install cameras on school buses. The aim was to crack down on drivers who break the law by driving past stopped school buses. Bill 94 passed second reading, but it then got stuck in legislative limbo.

On November 1, I learned what the government had done with my bill. The Attorney General introduced Bill 174, which deals with the legalization of cannabis. But other things were packed into that bill, including amendments to the Highway Traffic Act and the Smoke-Free Ontario Act and a version of my school bill.

1510

For better or for worse, the Trudeau Liberals decided to legalize cannabis. Their self-imposed deadline is July 1 next year. Many Ontarians are justifiably concerned about this, and the cannabis bill requires some intense scrutiny and serious debate. Sadly, this won't happen because this desperate government has invoked time allocation. What are they worried about? It needs more stakeholder input.

Well, if the government wants to save time, here's what should be done: Portions of Bill 174 that have nothing to do with the meeting of the July 1 cannabis deadline should be separated. This means that amendments to the Highway Traffic Act, including my school bus camera amendments, and changes to the Smoke-Free Ontario Act can be passed quickly.

It is not right for the Liberals to hold up these important changes, and it is wrong for them to play games. What does cannabis have to do with school bus safety?

My question is, what has this Liberal government been smoking?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Unfortunate.

BUDDHA'S LIGHT VEGETARIAN GALA

Mr. Bob Delaney: This past Sunday, I was pleased—as were some, in total on the weekend, 600 attendees—to be invited by the Fo Guang Shan Temple in Meadowvale in Mississauga to join them for an event that's only held once every three years. It's called the Buddha's Light Vegetarian Gala.

At the gala, you're going to get all-vegetarian food. It's the type that you wouldn't get at the fanciest Chinese restaurant. It's all prepared by volunteers. It's all served by volunteers. The entertainment is something that you might expect out of the finest theatre in Beijing. All night long, in between the courses, there were excellent singing and dancing numbers, and, of course, the drummers at Fo Guang Shan are without peer.

Most of the local elected members were all invited to attend on either Saturday or Sunday. We were all pleased to come and to share with the community, which is gentle and whose activities are so focused on our local charities and our local community.

My congratulations to the Venerable Yung Ku and to Mabel Lam, Glenn Chan and Stanley Kwan and all of the folks at Fo Guang Shan for a truly memorable Buddha's Light Vegetarian Gala 2017.

BILL THAKE MEMORIAL AWARD

Mr. Steve Clark: I rise to tip my hat to Heather Howard, Wendy Banks and Gerald Tallman, the hat trick of recipients honoured by the 2017 Bill Thake Memorial Award for Economic Development Leadership.

That's right. The award presentation at last Friday's annual Leeds and Grenville Economic Development Summit gave us three reasons to cheer. For the first time in the award's seven-year history, all three nominees were named co-winners. When you look at the accomplishments of this triumphant trio, who could choose just one?

Heather Howard operates the renowned duty-free shops at the Thousand Islands and Johnstown border crossings. Her beautiful FoxRun By The River Retirement Residence outside Gananoque has also undergone a major expansion.

Wendy Banks is a trailblazer in the local-food movement, making Leeds–Grenville a destination for those seeking a unique Local Flavours experience. Wendy's Country Market in Lyndhurst and her mobile delivery service put local farm products on the menu in restaurants and family kitchens across the region.

Gerald Tallman, who is incredibly charitable in the North Grenville community, built the Kemptville truck centre into the Tallman Group, which operates truck centres across the province and employs over 650 people.

Together, they represent the entrepreneurial spirit and good citizenship that grows the economy and sustains the communities in Leeds and Grenville. Friday's triple play gave people in every corner of Leeds–Grenville a reason to celebrate, and I ask everyone to join me in congratulating the recipients and all who made this year's economic development summit a huge success.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank all members for their statements.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

FLOOD AVOIDANCE, INSURANCE AND RECOVERY STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2017

LOI DE 2017 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI CONCERNE LA PRÉVENTION DES INONDATIONS, LES ASSURANCES ET LA REPRISE APRÈS UNE INONDATION

Mr. Natyshak moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 179, An Act to amend the Building Code Act, 1992, the Insurance Act and the Municipal Affairs Act in respect of flood avoidance, insurance and recovery /
Projet de loi 179, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1992 sur le code du bâtiment, la Loi sur les assurances et la Loi sur les affaires municipales concernant la prévention des inondations, les assurances et la reprise après une inondation.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: The bill is about flood avoidance, insurance and recovery.

The avoidance portion is that the Building Code Act, 1992, is amended: A residential building must have a rainwater tank of at least 204 litres.

On the insurance part, the Insurance Act is amended: The history of property insurance claims for residential properties in Ontario shall be public, and flood insurance shall not be declined on the basis of flooding if the flooding took place in a declared emergency.

On the recovery side, the Municipal Affairs Act is amended: Disaster recovery assistance shall provide for residential properties that suffer flooding from sewer backup, without means testing.

JETTERANCE CANADA LIMITED ACT, 2017

Ms. Wong moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr75, An Act to revive Jetterance Canada Limited.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to standing order 86, this bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

ALBANIAN HERITAGE MONTH

Hon. Laura Albanese: I rise today to recognize that this November we are marking the very first official Albanian Heritage Month in Ontario. A year and a half ago, I was honoured to first bring forward a private member's bill proclaiming November as Albanian Heritage Month in Ontario. I am very grateful to my friend, colleague and parliamentary assistant, the MPP for Etobicoke North, Dr. Shafiq Qadri, for taking the lead on the bill when I was no longer able to carry it through the legislative process because of my subsequent appointment to cabinet.

As members may recall, Bill 36, Albanian Heritage Month Act, sponsored by the member for Etobicoke North, was introduced on October 5, 2016. It received unanimous support in the House for its second reading on October 6, 2016, and third and final reading on December 5, 2016. The bill received royal assent on December 8 of the same year.

I would be remiss if I failed to give special thanks to the strong local Albanian community that worked tirelessly to make this bill a reality; specifically, members of the Albanian Canadian Community Association, including Dr. Ruki Kondaj, the honorary president of the association, as well as the current president, Ramazan Kellezi. Dr. Kondaj, a dedicated, passionate and valuable member of the Albanian Canadian community, has been instrumental in spearheading the community's efforts of having the bill passed into law.

This act allows us to recognize and celebrate the accomplishments and contributions of the Albanian Canadian community to Ontario. November is a significant month in their culture and history for a number of reasons. A revolt against the Ottoman Empire, which had occupied this region for more than five centuries, led to a declaration of independence on November 28, 1912. On this day, the Albanian community also celebrates Albanian Flag Day, a unifying symbol of the Albanian nation. Thirty-two years later, in 1944, Albania was liberated from Nazi occupation, and Liberation Day has been celebrated in the country on November 29 ever since.

1520

Each year, the Albanian Canadian community in Ontario celebrates these occasions by raising the Albanian flag here at Queen's Park as well as organizing cultural and social festive events throughout the province.

The community uses these occasions to also celebrate some of the well-known Albanians worldwide. The list is long, but it includes Mother Teresa, who has been

proclaimed a Roman Catholic saint. Mother Teresa was born in Macedonia to Kosovo Albanian parents. At the age of 18, she left Macedonia to join the Sisters of Loreto in Ireland to learn English. She made the eventual journey to India, where she devoted her lifelong career to the care of the poor, the ill and the disadvantaged. In 1979, Mother Teresa was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for her humanitarian work. Today she is considered an Albanian heroine and a unifying symbol of Albanian multi-faith identity.

Another Albanian hero is Gjergj Kastrioti Skanderbeg, the national hero who unified the nation in the 15th century in its resistance against the early days of the Ottoman Empire.

Other well-known Albanians include names such as Jim and John Belushi, American-Albanian Hollywood actors and comedians; Rita Ora and Dua Lipa, internationally known singers; Tie Domi, retired Canadian NHL ice hockey player; and last but not least, Inva Mula, a world-famous soprano, who performed at the Albanian Heritage Month reception here at Queen's Park last night, where I had the honour to join many members of the community to jointly celebrate this important month.

Albanian Canadians have been part of Ontario life for more than a century. Their community is represented from different parts of southeast Europe, where Albanians have inhabited for centuries, namely Albania proper, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Greece.

Italy, the country of my birth, has had an Albanian historical minority of a quarter of a million, scattered mostly across southern Italy. The historical Albanian community in Italy, who settled between the 15th and the 16th centuries, are known as Arbëreshë. The Arbëreshë have preserved their authentic language, religion, traditions, customs and art. I have had the opportunity to meet a number of Arbëreshë over the past several years.

Here in Canada, according to the latest statistics, there are just over 36,000 Canadians who claim Albanian origins. The first wave of immigration arrived in the early 20th century due to internal uprisings that occurred in the Balkan region due to the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. The second wave of Albanians arrived from the former Yugoslavia during the Cold War, and settled in Toronto and Montreal.

However, the biggest wave occurred as result of the collapse of the communist regime in 1992 and of the 1990s ethnic conflict in the former Yugoslavia. The government of Canada established a residency program to accept 7,000 Kosovo Albanian refugees fleeing the Kosovo conflict in 1998-99.

Today, the majority of Albanian Canadians reside in large municipalities, including the greater Toronto area, Hamilton, Kitchener, London, Ottawa, Peterborough and Windsor.

All in all, the Albanian community is integrated successfully and is a part of the diversity in which we all take pride. Members of the community can count on several cultural and community associations for support and networking opportunities.

Just last month, I had the pleasure of attending a gala fundraiser in support of Albanian House, a new project which, when completed, will be a terrific resource for all members of the community.

I have also had the pleasure of attending and was honoured with an award from the Albanian Canadian Excellence—or ACE—Society, a group whose mission is to promote excellence and recognize it within the Albanian professional community and to create and sustain the culture for its achievement.

Speaker, when I look at Ontario's Albanian community, I see why and how our province has been built on immigration. I see people who have come here and have settled into communities where their neighbours have shared experiences and perhaps similar backgrounds, but I also see people who embrace the chance to get to know and work and live among people with completely different experiences and who come from entirely different backgrounds. I am personally aware of what our province can offer immigrants who come here looking for a better life, and I'm also acutely aware of what newcomers can offer us in the way of culture, industry, community and citizenship, in the very best sense of the word.

Our province honours history and celebrates diversity. Albanian Canadians are a valued part of that. I am therefore very pleased to acknowledge Albanian Heritage Month here in the province of Ontario.

HINDU HERITAGE MONTH

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I'm pleased to rise today to talk about a very special month-long celebration taking place across Ontario: Hindu Heritage Month. This is Ontario's first official recognition of Hindu Heritage Month, which was introduced in 2016 by the member for Ajax-Pickering. It is an important recognition of the remarkable contributions made by members of the Hindu community in Ontario. In fact, Speaker, I was glad to speak a year ago in favour of Bill 52, the Hindu Heritage Month Act. I was pleased when it received overwhelming support from all parties.

Hindu Heritage Month is a time for Hindu families in our province to celebrate their culture, their traditions and their practices, because who we are and where we come from is the force that absolutely drives us forward. But it is also an important time to share and celebrate our culture and traditions with our friends and neighbours. It's about friendship, unity and understanding. I am delighted that people across Ontario have the opportunity this November and every November to learn about Hinduism, its history and traditions, and the many contributions of Hindus to this province. I was pleased to attend events for Hindu Heritage Month in my riding and here at Queen's Park, along with many of my colleagues.

Speaker, here in Ontario we are proud of our diversity. The first Hindu immigrants arrived in this country over 100 years ago. Today, there are close to 500,000 Hindus in all of Canada and a large majority of them live right here in our great province. In fact, more than 360,000

Hindus call Ontario their home. They have raised their families here, contributed to their communities here and helped to build this province up.

Ontarians of Hindu descent have made remarkable contributions in a wide range of fields, from science and education to politics and business to arts and sports. Hindu Heritage Month gives all of us an opportunity to recognize the significant contributions Hindus have made to Ontario society. Hindus have helped to foster Ontario's growth and prosperity for generations and I'm proud to stand in this Legislature and say thank you on behalf of the government.

Speaker, Hinduism is an important part of our diverse province. Hinduism represents a way of life, teaching openness, morality, inclusion and acceptance, all of which reflect the values of Ontario. Hindus take great pride in their culture and traditions and are eager to share them with everyone. In fact, Ontarians of all backgrounds participate in celebrations like Diwali, Navratri and Durga Puja. These festivals take place during the fall or harvest season, which makes this the perfect time of year for Ontarians to celebrate the Hindu community and learn about their long history and rich culture.

Hindu Heritage Month is also an opportunity to educate generations now and in the future about Hinduism, and further enhance our understanding and appreciation of each other. Speaker, our diversity has made Ontario an absolutely wonderful place to live, work and raise a family. We are a beacon to the world. Of all the Canadian provinces and territories, Ontario welcomes the highest number of newcomers. We know this diversity makes us all stronger.

As someone whose roots are South Asian and who immigrated to Canada with her family as young girl, I am proud we are celebrating the contributions and achievements of this important community. Multiculturalism brings enormous richness and vibrancy to our province. Hindu Canadians are leaders in our communities, volunteers, friends, co-workers and fellow Ontarians. Hindu Heritage Month is an opportunity to build upon the values of respect and inclusion that define us all.

1530

I urge all Ontarians to attend events, learn about and celebrate the heritage and cultural contributions of the Hindu community in Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Responses?

ALBANIAN HERITAGE MONTH

Mr. Rick Nicholls: I really appreciate learning even more about the Albanian community from the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.

I rise in the House today to recognize that November is Albanian Heritage Month. It's an especially important month for the Albanian community. On November 28, 1912, Albania declared its independence from the Ottoman Empire. On this day, the community also celebrates Albanian Flag Day—of course, a unifying symbol of the Albanian community. On November 29, 1944, Albania

was liberated from Nazi Germany, and that anniversary is now known as Albanian Liberation Day. The Albanian Canadian community celebrates those dates in Ontario with many cultural events and by raising the Albanian flag here at Queen's Park.

This European country has a very long history. Many may not know that the national Albanian hero is the 15th-century nobleman and soldier Gjergj Kastrioti, known by his nickname Skanderbeg, which is a respectful title invoking Alexander the Great, the Macedonian conqueror who conquered Persia back in the 4th century BC. Skanderbeg unified his country against the encroaching Ottoman Empire, and he successfully repulsed 13 invasions. It was 10 years after his death that the Ottoman Empire managed to conquer Albania.

Skanderbeg has gone down in history as one of the greatest generals and diplomats of all time. General James Wolfe, whose portrait hangs on the first floor of this building and who commanded the British forces at the Battle of Quebec, called Skanderbeg a commander who "excels all the officers, ancient and modern, in the conduct of a small defensive army."

During most of its troubled history, the land of Albania was part of the Eastern Roman Empire and later the Ottoman Empire. Albania is home to both eastern and western Christianity as well as Islam and Judaism.

There are almost 30,000 Albanian Canadians. The population is growing. Former Toronto Maple Leaf Tie Domi is probably one of the most famous Canadians of Albanian ancestry, but there are others, including Arlind Ferhati, the Albanian soccer player who immigrated to Canada when he was 10; and Ana Golja, who starred in *Degrassi: The Next Generation*.

As critic for tourism, culture and sport, I am privileged to salute those fine Canadians, and I'd like to wish everyone a happy Albanian Heritage Month.

HINDU HERITAGE MONTH

Mr. Steve Clark: It's an honour to rise on behalf of my leader, Patrick Brown, and the entire Ontario PC caucus to speak about Hindu Heritage Month.

This month is an opportunity for all Ontarians to celebrate the incredible contributions that Ontario's over 400,000-strong Hindu community has made to our province. From business and politics to the arts, science, academics and beyond, Ontario's Hindu community has left an indelible mark on our society. In doing so, they have made this province a better place to call home.

Last year, our PC caucus unanimously supported legislation to proclaim November as Hindu Heritage Month. In fact, our caucus held its own Hindu Heritage Month celebration right here at Queen's Park earlier this month. As our leader, Patrick Brown, noted then, "Over the past two years as leader of the PC Party, I have been honoured to visit temples and mandirs across our great province—meeting new friends and learning more about this ancient faith and the traditions that sustain it."

I had the privilege of speaking to the legislation proclaiming Hindu Heritage Month and noted how

welcoming the community has been to this MPP from rural, eastern Ontario at special events across the GTA and the province. They have opened their homes, their temples and their hearts, allowing me to better understand their culture and customs.

One of the great benefits of being an MPP is getting to know the communities that comprise Ontario's rich cultural fabric. I encourage everyone to join in celebrating Hindu Heritage Month and look for opportunities to learn more about our Hindu neighbours. To the community, I want to give my deepest and most sincere thanks for all you have given our province. I hope that the community enjoys this special month and the recognition that you so richly deserve. Your contributions are another example of why, in Ontario, our diversity doesn't divide us, but brings us closer together and makes us stronger.

ALBANIAN HERITAGE MONTH

Ms. Jennifer K. French: As the NDP critic for citizenship and immigration, it is my honour to have the opportunity to rise in the Legislature today to recognize and celebrate Albanian Heritage Month.

One of the greatest privileges of being a member of provincial Parliament is that we have the opportunity to meet with and learn from the many varied and diverse groups that comprise our province. So I am excited to be speaking today.

In preparation for this statement, I've done a little bit of learning about the Albanian community in Ontario and Canada, and I'd like to share a bit of what I have learned here today.

As of the 2011 census, Canada was home to more than 28,000 people of Albanian descent, a number that grew by nearly 25% since the 2006 census and that continues to rise. Now Ontario alone is home to more than 28,000 Albanian Canadians. It's also worth noting that Ontario is home to the majority of the Albanian Canadian population.

To recognize the importance of the Albanian community in Ontario, the Albanian Heritage Month Act received royal assent in December of last year, so this is our first Albanian Heritage Month. The month of November was selected as it holds a special significance to the Albanian community. Each November marks the anniversary of the Albanian Declaration of Independence, which declared Albania an independent sovereign nation on November 28, 1912.

As noted in the preamble of this act, "By proclaiming the month of November as Albanian Heritage Month, the province of Ontario recognizes the meaningful contributions immigrants have made in building Ontario's communities and the social, economic, political and cultural achievements of Albanian Canadians throughout the province. Albanian Heritage Month is an opportunity to remember, celebrate and educate future generations about Ontario's rich history."

Speaker, as I noted earlier, declaring a new heritage month gives Ontarians the important opportunity to learn

about the contributions of communities other than their own, and allows us to celebrate the diversity of cultures that make Ontario such an incredible place to call home.

Thank you to the Albanian community in Ontario and across the country for allowing all of us to celebrate with you today and this month, and I look forward to recognizing and remembering the contributions of the Albanian Canadian community each and every November.

HINDU HERITAGE MONTH

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Once again, as the NDP critic for citizenship and immigration, I am also honoured to stand in the Legislature today to recognize and celebrate Hindu Heritage Month this November. This will be our first November celebrating Hindu Heritage Month in Ontario following the passage of the Hindu Heritage Month Act, which received royal assent in December 2016.

Hindu Heritage Month allows us the opportunity to celebrate Ontario's large and vibrant Hindu community. As of the 2011 census, Canada is home to nearly 500,000 practising Hindus, 366,000 of whom live in Ontario. This is a significant portion of the population in Ontario and one that continues to grow each year.

As we all know, Diwali is the Hindu festival of lights, and the largest annual celebration in the Hindu community. Depending on the lunar calendar, Diwali falls in either October or November each year in Canada, making November an important month for the Hindu community and the basis for recognizing November as Hindu Heritage Month in Ontario.

Of course, the Hindu community in Ontario and Canada is just a part of the global Hindu community, composed of more than a billion people, making it the world's third-largest religion. I also have to acknowledge the Hindu community in the Durham region, which is more than 12,000 strong and incredibly active as well.

As I mentioned earlier, the importance of heritage months is the educational opportunity that they provide. I was pleased to learn more about the accepting and loving nature of Hinduism and that tolerance is the foremost virtue of the Hindu religion. These are universal principles that should be celebrated, regardless of religion or background. I am happy to have the opportunity to celebrate these principles today and to recognize their importance in the Hindu community and across all of our communities.

Once again, one of the greatest privileges of this role is that we have the opportunity to meet with and learn from the many varied and diverse groups that comprise our province. The more that we know and understand about each other, the stronger we all become.

1540

I want to thank the Canadian and Ontario Hindu community for allowing all of us the opportunity to recognize Hindu Heritage Month today, and I look forward to continuing to celebrate in Novembers to come.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank all members for their statements.

PETITIONS

SCHOOL BUS SAFETY

Mr. Rick Nicholls: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Bill 94, Highway Traffic Amendment Act (School Bus Camera Systems), 2017, will make it easier to get convictions for drivers who do not stop when lights are flashing and the stop arm is extended on a school bus; and

"Whereas responsible governments must update laws as new technology is developed; and

"Whereas numerous states and provinces are already leveraging new technology to convict drivers who put children in danger while Ontario falls behind; and

"Whereas municipalities including the city of Mississauga have passed resolutions in support of Bill 94; and

"Whereas the Ministry of Transportation has had three years to conduct consultations after a similar bill was initially introduced in 2014 and thousands of children are put in danger each day due to low conviction rates;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To call Bill 94 to committee so it can be strengthened with input from the Ministry of Transportation and other experts engaged in ensuring student safety and to pass Bill 94 into legislation in order to protect our children from motorists who disobey school bus safety laws."

I agree with this petition wholeheartedly, and I will give it to Emma, our legislative page.

STUDENT LOANS

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario entitled "Eliminate interest from Ontario student loans." I'd like to thank the students from Fanshawe College who signed this petition.

"Whereas the Liberal government should not be profiting from student loans in Ontario;

"Whereas Ontario is the most expensive province in which to access post-secondary education;

"Whereas the average debt load for university students after four years is \$28,000 and the average debt load for anyone with post-graduate experience is \$35,000;

"Whereas the Ontario government made more than \$25 million in profit from interest on student loans last year alone;

"Whereas seemingly insurmountable student debt delays important life milestones for young people, placing a burden on both graduates with debt and on the provincial economy as a whole;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Legislative Assembly immediately eliminate interest from student loans."

I fully support this petition, affix my signature and will give it to page Isabelle.

ELEVATOR MAINTENANCE

Mr. James J. Bradley: I have a petition regarding Bill 109.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas we've seen rapid growth of vertical communities across Ontario; and

"Whereas elevators are an important amenity for a resident of a high-rise residential building; and

"Whereas ensuring basic mobility and standards of living for residents remain top priority; and

"Whereas the unreasonable delay of repairs for elevator services across Ontario is a concern for residents of high-rise buildings resulting in constant breakdowns, mechanical failures and 'out of service' notices for unspecified amounts of time;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Urge the Ontario Legislature to support Bill 109, the Reliable Elevators Act, 2017, that requires the repairs of elevators to be completed within a reasonable and prescribed time frame. We urge the Legislature to address these concerns that are shared by residents of Trinity-Spadina and across Ontario."

I affix my signature as I'm in complete agreement, and I'm going to give it to Adam.

SCHOOL BUS SAFETY

Mr. John Yakabuski: I have a petition that I'm delivering on behalf of the MPP for Chatham-Kent-Essex.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Bill 94, Highway Traffic Amendment Act (School Bus Camera Systems), 2017, will make it easier to get convictions for drivers who do not stop when lights are flashing and the stop arm is extended on a school bus; and

"Whereas responsible governments must update laws as new technology is developed; and

"Whereas numerous states and provinces are already leveraging new technology to convict drivers who put children in danger while Ontario falls behind; and

"Whereas municipalities including the city of Mississauga have passed resolutions in support of Bill 94; and

"Whereas the Ministry of Transportation has had three years to conduct consultations after a similar bill was initially introduced in 2014 and thousands of children are put in danger each day due to low conviction rates;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To call Bill 94 to committee so it can be strengthened with input from the Ministry of Transportation and other experts engaged in ensuring student safety and to pass

Bill 94 into legislation in order to protect our children from motorists who disobey school bus safety laws."

I am fully in support of this petition, affix my name to it and send it down with Vanditha.

PHARMACARE

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank Samuel Harriman from Capreol in my riding for this petition. It reads as follows:

"Whereas prescription medications are a part of health care, and people shouldn't have to empty their wallets or rack up credit card bills to get the medicines they need;

"Whereas over 2.2 million Ontarians don't have any prescription drug coverage and one in four Ontarians don't take their medications as prescribed because they cannot afford the cost;

"Whereas taking medications as prescribed can save lives and help people live better; and

"Whereas Canada urgently needs universal and comprehensive national pharmacare;"

They petition "the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support a universal provincial pharmacare plan for all Ontarians."

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask Javeriar to bring it to the Clerk.

BRUCE POWER

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas Bruce Power provides 30% of Ontario's electricity production at 30% below the average cost to generate residential power;

"Whereas extending the operational life of the Bruce Power energy units will ensure families and businesses have long-term, low-cost stability and clean air to breathe;

"Whereas the Life-Extension Program (LEP) will secure an estimated 22,000 jobs and an additional 3,000 to 5,000 jobs annually throughout the investment program, injecting billions into Ontario's economy;

"Whereas BWXT contributes approximately 1,000 high-skilled, high-paying jobs to residents of Cambridge, Peterborough, Toronto, Arnprior and Dundas and their surrounding areas;

"Whereas BWXT generates over \$90 million in payroll and procures over \$100 million in Ontario goods and services annually across its five major operating locations in Ontario;

"Whereas BWXT contributes back over \$50,000 annually to worthy charitable organizations and celebrates a strong engineering co-op program to support the mentorship and development of local engineering students;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To support the vital role that nuclear power plays in delivering clean, affordable electricity while contributing

to a prosperous, well-employed regional economy and across the province.”

I am going to sign this petition and send it with Davis.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Jim Wilson: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Collingwood General and Marine Hospital is challenged to support the growing needs of the community within its existing space;

“Whereas a building condition assessment found the major systems of the hospital will require renewal within the next 10 years;

“Whereas substandard facilities exist in the emergency department; there is no space in the dialysis department to expand, and there is a lack of storage and crowding in many areas of the building; and, structurally, additional floors can’t be added to the existing building to accommodate growth;

“Whereas there is no direct connection from the medical device repurposing department to the operating room;

“Whereas there is a lack of quiet rooms, interview rooms and lounge space;

“Whereas Collingwood General and Marine Hospital deserves equitable servicing comparable to other Ontario hospitals;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the government immediately provide the necessary funding to Collingwood General and Marine Hospital so that it can build a new hospital to serve the needs of the community.”

Obviously I agree with this, and I will sign it.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I’d like to thank YWCA Toronto for helping collect signatures on a petition to support survivors of domestic violence and sexual violence. It is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it reads:

“Whereas half of all Canadian women have experienced at least one incident of physical or sexual violence in their lifetime, and approximately every six days a woman in Canada is killed by her intimate partner; and
1550

“Whereas a 2014 national survey showed that Canadian workers who experience domestic violence often disclose the violence to a co-worker, and that the violence frequently follows the worker to work; and

“Whereas the experience of domestic violence and sexual violence can cause significant physical, mental, emotional and financial hardship for survivors, their families, and society as a whole; and

“Whereas Canadian employers lose \$78 million annually due to domestic violence, and \$18 million due to sexual violence, because of direct and indirect impacts

that include distraction, decreased productivity, and absenteeism; and

“Whereas workers who experience domestic violence or sexual violence should not have to jeopardize their employment in order to seek medical attention, access counselling, relocate, or deal with police, lawyers or the courts;...

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the Legislative Assembly pass Bill 26 to provide employees who have experienced domestic violence or sexual violence (or whose children have experienced domestic violence or sexual violence) with up to 10 days of paid leave, reasonable unpaid leave, and options for flexible work arrangements, and to require employers to provide mandatory workplace training about domestic violence and sexual violence.”

I completely support this petition, affix my name and give it to Sean.

SCHOOL BUS SAFETY

Mr. Steve Clark: This is a petition entitled “Petition to pass Bill 94 and enhance student safety.” I know the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke tabled it earlier so I’ll read the “Therefore”:

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To call Bill 94 to committee so it can be strengthened with input from the Ministry of Transportation and other experts engaged in ensuring student safety and to pass Bill 94 into legislation in order to protect our children from motorists who disobey school bus safety laws.”

I encourage the government to separate this out of Bill 174 as we’ve been calling on. I’ll sign my name to it and give it to page Devon.

ANTI-SMOKING INITIATIVES FOR YOUTH

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition that comes from all over my riding, but I want to thank Ray Hatfield from beautiful Biscotasing in Nickel Belt. It reads as follows:

“Whereas in the past 10 years in Ontario, 86% of all movies with on-screen smoking were rated for youth, and the tobacco industry has a well-documented history of promoting tobacco use on-screen; and

“Whereas a scientific report released by the Ontario Tobacco Research Unit estimated that 185,000 children in Ontario today will be recruited to smoking by exposure to on-screen smoking, and more than 59,000 will eventually die from tobacco-related diseases incurring at least \$1.1 billion in health care costs; and

“Whereas the Ontario government has a stated goal to achieve the lowest smoking rates in Canada, and 79% of Ontarians support not allowing smoking in movies rated G, PG, 14A...; and

“Whereas the Minister of Government and Consumer Services has the authority to amend the regulations of the Film Classification Act...;

They “petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To examine the ways in which the regulations of the Film Classification Act could be amended to reduce smoking in youth-rated films released in Ontario.”

I support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask Erion to bring it to the Clerk.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): The member from Northumberland–Quinte West.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Good test. You remembered.

I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas podiatrists treat foot pain and deformities in women twice as often as foot disabilities in men, often due to having to wear high heels in their workplaces;

“Whereas Ontario podiatrists see far too many patients with injuries in the workplace that are entirely avoidable and are caused by wearing footwear that is inappropriate or outright unsafe;

“Whereas clinical evidence demonstrates that wearing high-heeled shoes causes a much higher incidence of bunions, musculoskeletal pain and injury than those who do not wear high heels;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To put their best foot forward, and take swift action to amend the Occupational Health and Safety Act to protect workers from dress codes that mandate unsafe footwear in the workplace.”

I will sign this petition and send it to the Chair with Adam.

OPIOID ABUSE

Mr. Victor Fedeli: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the opioid crisis is worsening in Ontario with each passing day, and 2016 had a record of 865 opioid-related deaths recorded, and an increase of 19% from the year before;

“Whereas involvement with one of the most dangerous and powerful opioids, fentanyl, has seen an increase of 548% from 2006-2015, and is now the most commonly involved opioid in opioid-related deaths;

“Whereas one of the most important tools in the fight against the opioid crisis is prevention and that comes with increased and constant education and awareness;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the government review and adopt Nick’s Law, ensuring that at least 10% of the Ontario government’s advertising budget is allocated to education and aware-

ness campaigns on the risks of taking opioids, fentanyl and fentanyl-laced counterfeit drugs;

“That the Ontario government review and adopt Bill 126, Illegal Pill Press Act;

“That the Ontario government release weekly overdose reporting data to the public; and

“That the Ontario government create a ministerial task force to take urgent action to address the opioid crisis.”

I agree with this, sign my name and give it to page Isabelle.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): The time for petitions has expired.

I recognize the member from Leeds–Grenville on a point of order.

Mr. Steve Clark: Yes, Mr. Speaker, point of order: I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice to split Bill 174.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): That particular motion has been dealt with already this morning several times.

Is there unanimous consent to split Bill 174? I heard a no.

Orders of the day.

OPPOSITION DAY

ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. Patrick Brown: I move that, whereas the Ontario Liberals ignored expert advice when implementing electricity that has led to an oversupply of electricity at times when the power isn’t being used in Ontario; and

Whereas this has led to Ontario exporting electricity to Michigan and New York at prices that are less than Ontario ratepayers are paying for exactly the same power; and

Whereas independent energy experts have put the cost to produce that carbon-free power that is being exported at more than a billion dollars for 2016 and more than \$840 million for the first nine months of 2017; and

Whereas this means that the government stands to lose between \$340 million and \$675 million per year on the export of this electricity;

Therefore, we call on the government of Ontario to reimburse Ontario ratepayers the cost of the loss incurred by exporting this surplus electricity.

This is addressed to the Premier.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Mr. Brown has moved opposition day number 4. Mr. Brown.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It’s my pleasure to rise today in support of the Ontario PCs’ opposition day motion.

We often talk about the great accomplishments in public policy in this place, in this Legislature, in this House of our democracy. Admittedly we haven’t done that a lot recently, but I want to acknowledge the work of Adam Beck. His decision over a century ago to offer

electricity at cost to the people of Ontario represents one of the great achievements in this House in Ontario's democracy.

A century ago, Beck saw a province of farmers, family businesses and industrialists struggling under competitive pressure from the United States. He decided to do something about it. He decided to put the power of Niagara Falls into their hands. Beck's vision of reliable and affordable hydroelectricity lit this province for half a century until Ontario started putting thermal generating stations and, later, nuclear stations online. Without that vision, Ontario would never have been able to power the mining towns in the north, cars would never have been able to roll off the assembly line in Oshawa and Windsor, and we'd have dark main streets in Kenora and Kitchener.

At no point in our long tradition in Ontario, our tradition of reliable and affordable power, did we ever say that we'd have bad neighbours. We have always said there are strong ties. Our strong ties meant that we could export or trade power with Quebec, Michigan and New York. What has happened today is unfortunate. Over the last decade, decisions have been made that have tilted the relationship against Ontario. StatsCanada numbers reveal that Ontario exports twice as much power as it did in 2005. Think about that, Mr. Speaker: We export twice as much power as we did in 2005. At a time when Ontarians are running their dishwashers in the middle of the night and pinching their pennies to afford their next hydro bill, this government is getting half as much for exported electricity as it did 12 years ago. Now, I remember asking the Premier in this House why she has become the best minister of economic development that Pennsylvania has ever seen, but that's the legacy of this government.

1600

Ontarians have seen triple-digit increases since 2005, but Ontario's neighbours are paying less and less with each year for the same electricity. We're charging Ontarians to give it away. And today we found out that not only is Ontario exporting more electricity and getting less money for it; we're actually losing money in the deal. Ontarians are, in fact, subsidizing Michigan's ratepayers, Quebec ratepayers and New York ratepayers to the tune of \$1.25 billion in the last 21 months. Ontario ratepayers, who are struggling to pay their hydro bills because of this flawed Liberal policy, are subsidizing ratepayers in New York, Michigan and Quebec—absolutely incredible.

Mr. Todd Smith: Guess where the jobs are going?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Yes, Mr. Speaker, as I hear the comments, it's absolutely right: Where is that investment? Where are those jobs going?

The amazing part about that number is that's the net cost to Ontario ratepayers. That comes after you factor in what those jurisdictions pay for power. That means that every residential ratepayer in Ontario, every Ontario family, paid \$250 on average for the privilege of sending electricity elsewhere. Imagine that: We're charging the average family \$250 that they don't have. They're struggling to put food on their table and pay their hydro bill, and we're charging them \$250 to subsidize busi-

nesses in other provinces and states? That's the Liberals' energy policy. And that's just since January 2016.

So when the government gets up and talks about how much money they have made off the sale of exported electricity, we now know that those numbers are not accurate. It's just tired spin: the same old, same old lines from this tired government. Ontario ratepayers are always working harder to cover the government's mistakes. Ontario ratepayers are always paying more to cover for this government's misguided energy policy. And Ontario ratepayers are getting less because of this government's mistakes. Everyone in Ontario is paying more and they're getting less. It's unbelievable.

Well, our companies are actually being even more damaged. You look at businesses: small businesses in Ontario, large business, industry, manufacturing. They're all struggling to keep the jobs here. Not only is it a devastating hydro policy that puts families at the brink but it's killing jobs in our communities. We have mines closing because of this and going to Quebec, like Xstrata copper. We have the next generation of the Chevy Camaro that gets made in Michigan, not Oshawa. New York economic development agencies are putting ads in papers in Brockville and Cornwall to try to get businesses to move across the river.

Mr. Speaker, despite the government trying to paint a rosy picture, the reality is that today's numbers from the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers show that politically motivated decisions by this government in our electricity system have helped get Liberal insiders rich off your hydro bills. For years, the government has continued to sign bad contract after bad contract, to the tune of, if you look at these 30 mega contracts the government doled out, these bad contracts, \$1.3 million donated to the Ontario Liberal Party.

On renewable energy, we overpaid by \$9.2 billion. They said this was about green energy. We know what it was really about, Mr. Speaker. It was about the Liberal Party coffers. That's what it was about. Because we are wasting our own green energy: clean, green Ontario water power. You talk about the hypocrisy in that, Mr. Speaker. What I can't even fathom is that, after borrowing all this money, billions of dollars, up to \$93 billion in an unfair hydro plan, now they're committing the same mistakes again. Now, under FIT 5, they proceeded with 390 more contracts. They're borrowing money for old bad contracts and they keep on signing them. It's the definition of insanity, Mr. Speaker.

Even worse, even more shocking, on this flawed energy policy, during the summer, Quebec's media leaked details of a backroom deal with the Wynne Liberals that they had been negotiating with Hydro-Québec for more energy we don't need. It would have sent \$126 billion to Quebec for power we don't need while risking thousands of good-paying jobs in the province of Ontario. This is in spite of the fact we're sitting on a large supply of clean energy.

I don't know what the Liberals have against clean, green Ontario hydroelectric generation. Last year, the

Wynne Liberals allowed 4.7 terawatt hours of hydro-electric power to be wasted in Ontario. This is the same as powering nearly 500,000 homes. Think about that: They signed bad contracts for energy we don't need to such an extent that we have to waste our own water power. And not just a little bit: enough to power 500,000 homes. How sad that is, Mr. Speaker.

They have failed when it comes to energy policy; they have failed to get hydro rates under control. So when I say that the Premier is the best minister of economic development that the northern United States has ever seen, it is based on facts, it is based on evidence, because we are wasting our own water power and charging Ontarians to give it away to our competitors.

That's why Ontarians should start getting what they pay for. They should be paying to make life more affordable; they shouldn't be paying to make life more affordable outside of Ontario. That's why today the PCs are making a straightforward request to reimburse the ratepayers for money wasted on exporting surplus power. Given the government's mismanagement on electricity, it seems to be only appropriate and what the ratepayers deserve. So I hope today that the Liberal members in the House, rather than taking their orders from the Premier's office, will think of all their constituents in their ridings who are struggling with this giant, giant, colossal mistake of Liberal energy policy and think about those constituents in their ridings who can't afford that \$250 to subsidize a business in Michigan.

It's time to have reasonable energy policy in the province of Ontario. I hope the Liberal members and every member in this House will support this request.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Ms. Cindy Forster: It's great to get up and have 10 minutes to speak on this issue. The great achievements in public policy under Sir Adam Beck—power at cost. We had that power at cost for many, many years. But, in fact, in 1998, it was actually the PCs, under Minister Jim Wilson, the Minister of Energy, who officially declared that the Adam Beck vision was over, that a new vision for hydro had arrived under Mike Harris. That's when it all started to unravel. I'm not saying that there weren't problems, that there were no problems with brownouts and lack of power in those days, but deregulation actually happened under the PCs. Ernie Eves was part of that plan.

I remember sitting on city council and later on my local hydro board. I remember the millions of dollars of taxes that people in our municipalities actually ended up paying towards this deregulated system that, at the end of the day, never really happened. Probably billions of dollars were actually wasted under that plan.

The PCs actually had the experience of Alberta under a PC government at the time, under Ralph Klein, who had tried to deregulate a couple of years before their plan went forward. That didn't work either, and Alberta spent millions and millions of dollars trying to go through that plan. The rate of hydro here went from 4.3 cents to 10.9

cents a kilowatt hour on the first day that the market actually opened. So the Tories then had to back off and had to go back to sending out refund cheques to their constituents and to the taxpayers here in the province of Ontario.

We have the Liberals now over on that side of the House who now have sold off 60% of our hydro in the province and are borrowing billions of dollars to subsidize a rate decrease that they actually created.

I wanted to move a bit to the issue of the CEO salary. I think you will remember that during the minority government, it was the NDP who proposed that we put a cap on CEO salaries in this province, on agencies and hospitals and school boards and those kinds of things.

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At the end of the day, under the Tories, we had Eleanor Clitheroe, who was making \$2.2 million in, I think, 2001-02, which included her car allowance of \$172,000 and vacation pay of \$172,000. She also stood to get \$6 million in cash if she left Hydro One for any reason. She stood to receive an annual pension of up to \$1 million—annual pension.

Today, we have the Liberals on the other side—their CEO, Mr. Schmidt, is making \$4.5 million, but \$4.85 million if you add in his perks and benefits, up to 10 times higher than any hydro CEO in the country. That is shameful.

The Tory government brought in some legislation to clamp down on utility executive salaries, prompting the Hydro One board to resign in protest when they saw the government interfering with Hydro One. The provincial government subsequently appointed a new board of directors.

What happened to that legislation? If the Tories brought it in and they were capping Hydro CEO salaries, why is it that today the Liberals' CEO of Hydro here in the province of Ontario is making double what Eleanor made? Nothing seems to have changed; CEOs just keep being paid outrageous salaries.

After Eleanor was let go—and I think she was compensated quite well. Her agreement was a \$33,000 pension a month, which was part of her contract. The government of the day, the Tories, reduced that down to a \$24,000-a-month salary—not a year—a month. She took the government to court, I think, in 2008 or 2009. Anyway, the government rolled back her monthly pension to \$24,000. At the time that she got that \$24,000 a month, the average Hydro employee was only making about \$24,000 a year in pension. Today the pension of the average worker in this province in the public sector pension is around \$25,000 a year, as opposed to \$25,000 a month. A lot of things haven't changed over the years.

I want to spend my last minute telling you about one of my local constituents, who is really struggling, unlike Eleanor Clitheroe or Mr. Schmidt. Roger, age 68, a retiree, has been without hydro in his storefront apartment since April 2016. He came into the office looking to get some reconnection. He was cut off for not paying his bill. He doesn't have enough money to pay his hydro bill.

Hydro said that if he came up with \$250 pronto, he might qualify for the Niagara Emergency Energy Fund administered through the Hope Centre. The urgency was that the fund was coming to completion/restriction. He would have had to get his bill below \$1,500. Unfortunately, we couldn't reach Roger, because Roger can't afford a cellphone or a phone service, and so he didn't meet the time limit.

Seniors like Roger in my community have been struggling to keep the lights on in communities across Ontario for years because their hydro bills have been skyrocketing under the Liberals' watch. Ontarians whose financial resources were exhausted long before the Liberals decided to buy votes by mortgaging the future to subsidize hydro bills have had to scramble from agency to agency, hat in hand, trying desperately to get help with a basic need like electricity.

When the Liberals say, "We've reduced hydro rates by 25%"—well, they increased them by 300% before they reduced them by 25%. So in fact, it's really a minimal reduction, when these poor people who are struggling to put food on the table and pay their rent can't even get any relief on their hydro.

I thank you, Speaker. I'm going to leave some time for my colleagues.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mr. Bob Delaney: Speaker, if families in Ontario ever needed a solid reason to conclude that the Ontario PC Party has no plans, no ideas and no credibility, this opposition day motion also shows that they have no integrity. The premises of this motion are nonsensical, and its conclusion is about as ridiculous as it is inaccurate.

Let's take this mess apart, talk about how electricity is actually exchanged between neighbouring utilities, and explain how it is that Ontario has gone from being a net electricity importer under the last sorry two terms of Conservative government to being a profitable electricity exporter during the last six years of our Liberal government.

Speaker, the PC energy critic is a colleague of mine, and I may say, across the aisle, a friend of mine, the member for Prince Edward-Hastings. I'm certain he was not consulted in this. There are far too many errors in this for my friend to have let it go. Let's just take a couple of them.

For example, were the PC energy critic actually consulted on this, he would have advised his leader that energy procurement is administered by the Independent Electricity System Operator. It's completely at arm's length from the province, and it's not in any way connected with the government. In fact, Speaker, the Minister of Energy's office is informed by the IESO which contracts are successful after the proponents have been told.

Speaker, let's just continue on this: The premise of the motion by the Leader of the Opposition is that the province ignored expert advice. To the contrary, it was

expert advice, consistent policies and progressive ideas that dug Ontario out of the terrible mess left behind by the disgraced Harris-Eves government. Under the watch of that party 10 years ago, executive positions in the old Ontario Hydro and in the Ontario Power Generation and Hydro One entities that succeeded it used to go to Conservative Party hacks who knew nothing about electricity. The truly awful energy policies of that Conservative government from 1995 to 2003 did more than run our electricity system into the ground.

Let's remind folks about what the Conservatives did so that they can better understand what they plan to do, because the best predictor of future behaviour is what you did in the past. Even though the Ontario economy during that Conservative government of the 1990s was growing and the population in Ontario rapidly expanding back then, Ontario was, in the 1990s and through the turn of the century, steadily losing the ability to generate electricity—and its price was climbing. Even though the Conservatives cranked up coal-fired generation to a quarter of the total power generated, that could not keep up with the wilful neglect of our nuclear reactors. Indeed, of the eight Pickering reactors, two were shut down so badly on their watch, when electricity decisions were made by political hacks for political reasons, that two of the Pickering reactors could not be restarted and remain shut down today.

Ontario, despite the clear indicators that renewable energy was the way of the future for every progressive economy, did nothing on the last watch of the Conservative government to make any renewable plans or to implement any form of renewable power on our grid at all. At the turn of the millennium, under a Conservative government, Ontario was a global laggard in renewable energy. Today, Speaker, Ontario is a global leader in clean, economical, renewable energy. This is an important point to make in this debate because this opposition day motion incorrectly asserts that Ontario has an oversupply of electricity at times when power isn't being used in Ontario. I'll come back to that.

But let's go back to the indicators of wholesale energy incompetence on the watch of the last Conservative government and talk about it, because that will indicate how that incompetence is being projected into the future that the Conservatives envision for Ontario.

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Conservative policies led to brownouts at the turn of the millennium, and Conservative energy policies point Ontario to brownouts in the future if Ontarians vote against their own best interests and believe a single word that Conservatives say on electricity.

Conservatives tried unsuccessfully to privatize the electricity system in Ontario 10 years ago. Copycatting a spectacular failure in the United States—

Mr. John Yakabuski: Twenty years ago.

Mr. Bob Delaney: —20 years ago—in the United States and everywhere, the Conservatives tried to sell off the electricity system, and first split off the long-term debt incurred to build the system that the province de-

veloped from the end of World War II to the mid-1990s. That long-term debt was fully secured by such assets as our nuclear reactors, our power dams, our power lines and other generation, transmission and distribution assets. There was no need to split it off if one had kept the old Ontario Hydro as a single entity.

In proposing to sell off our electricity assets, the province would, as they had proposed it, completely lose every iota of control over them and the ability to share in their net earnings, unlike this government's successful plan to take advantage of its equity and transmission without losing control of the company.

The last PC government dumped more than \$20 billion of long-term debt on the taxpayer. It was called the stranded debt. They added a further \$1 billion of debt in net purchases of electricity at rates as high as \$2 per kilowatt hour for power which was then resold in Ontario at 4.3 cents per kilowatt hour. I guess they thought that with losses like that, they could make it up on volume.

It led to brownouts between 1999 and 2003. These brownouts were foreseeable and avoidable. This opposition day motion tells Ontarians to get ready for more Conservative brownouts in the future if they should form a government.

Just in time, Ontarians tossed them out of office in 2003. The province then moved to fix the system, phase out coal, upgrade generation and transmission, phase in renewables, refurbish our Candu nuclear reactors, and better connect to our neighbouring jurisdictions in the years that followed.

This nuthead resolution accuses Ontario of having—I will use his exact words—“an oversupply of electricity at times when the power isn't being used in Ontario.” Really? They can't be serious. Every electrical utility must plan to have on hand the capacity to generate or have available enough electricity to meet its peak demand. This means that during off-peak times, when the electricity grid does not demand as much as when it is at its peak demand time, every single power system in existence will, by definition, have an oversupply of generation capacity available.

Today, November 21, for example, Ontario's peak demand is projected to be about 18,000 megawatts. This peak demand normally occurs between midday and late afternoon. That means, unless there is to be a good old-fashioned Conservative brownout in Ontario, our nuclear reactors, power dams, renewable sources, gas plants and imports must be able to deliver that 18,000 megawatts of electricity to Ontario industries and commercial, institutional and residential consumers from midday to about late afternoon.

Today, November 21, during our peak demand period, Ontario is projected to have available some 10,000 megawatts of nuclear capacity, 2,800 megawatts of wind, 3,800 megawatts of hydroelectric, 125 megawatts of solar, 270 megawatts of natural gas and 27 megawatts of biofuel. On a continuing basis throughout today, Ontario will import about 239 megawatts of electricity and export about 2,400 megawatts of power on an hourly basis.

After dinner hour, when industrial, commercial and institutional electricity demand in Ontario is lower, Ontario will have surplus power and the Independent Electricity System Operator will have customers waiting to buy it from evening to tomorrow morning.

During the summer, when air conditioning runs flat out in Ontario, that peak power demand can run as high as 24,000 megawatts. That means that unless you want Conservative-style brownouts, Ontario must be able to generate or buy that amount of electricity to meet our in-province demands.

That's why the Conservatives have no credibility on electricity: Because they can't count. If you can generate enough power to meet your peak demand, you will have some surplus at other times. If you can't generate enough electricity to meet your peak demand, you will have a brownout or a power blackout. If you agree with what the Conservatives want you to do in this motion, you'd better be prepared to do without electricity at the very moment when you need it most: in the peak of summer or in the middle of the day.

We need to have enough electricity generation and transmission capacity to meet our peak power demand on a daily and seasonal basis. That means doing the correct, the prudent, the responsible and the right thing will give rise to what this motion calls an “oversupply of electricity” at other times and in the fall, winter and spring of the year in Ontario.

Our Ontario grid connects to the provinces of Quebec and Manitoba and to the states of New York, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin and Minnesota at 26 points along Ontario's border with those provinces and states. These points are where Ontario exchanges electricity with neighbouring jurisdictions. They are called, in electricity-speak, interties. From these 26 intertie points, we exchange electricity with our neighbours.

Morning at the Independent Electricity System Operator offices in Mississauga consists of planning for what they know Ontario will need in a day; looking at what our neighbours might need, what we know our neighbours will need; what the weather patterns are; what generation stations or transmission lines are under construction or repair; and what prudent reserves are needed in case the unexpected happens, because without those prudent reserves, you have a brownout.

Our people and their counterparts in Quebec, New York, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Minnesota and Manitoba are in touch on a continuing basis through the Independent Electricity System Operator. They do the same thing in all of those other areas. If a power line goes down in Michigan, they might need Ontario power to maintain service to their customers. If the wind isn't blowing or the sun isn't shining in Ontario, we may need to make a choice between firing up a natural gas plant or importing electricity from one of our neighbours.

Utilities buy power from one another many times during the day. At off-peak times in the spring and the fall, Ontario may have surplus power for a period of minutes or hours. If a neighbouring utility needs it for

such a short time, they may be able to procure it either cheaply or even for free. Similarly, if a neighbouring utility needs power from Ontario for an extended period of time, perhaps because of a shutdown at one of their generating stations, they will contract for the power for a fee.

The question is not, as this nuthead resolution asserts, whether Ontario exports electricity to Michigan and New York at prices that are less than what Ontario ratepayers are paying for the same power, but whether, over a full year, when all the many thousands of transactions are reconciled, Ontario made a net surplus or a net loss. Every jurisdiction exchanges some electricity on a short-term basis at rates higher or lower than the base price paid in their jurisdiction. That traffic goes both ways, and New York, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin and Minnesota send surplus power to Ontario at a loss too.

Ontario Conservatives know all about losing money on electricity imports. They lost billions between 1995 and 2003. Ontario Liberals, by contrast, know all about making a net surplus. Each year, Ontario earns a net surplus of between a quarter of a billion and a third of a billion dollars in net sales of electricity to our neighbouring jurisdictions through these 26 intertie points.

1630

In energy, as in our economy and in our population, Ontario is the elephant in the room in the Great Lakes basin. Ontario has implemented forward-looking policies which continue to save electricity consumers money and make better use of our assets and those of our neighbours.

Let's look at an idea that our government implemented that a Conservative government never tried. Ontario's season of peak demand is in the summer; Quebec's peak demand occurs in the winter. For the last few years, Ontario and Quebec have both benefited from a bilateral power transfer guarantee agreement that sees each province reserve 500 megawatts of generating capacity for the other at the same price during their complementary periods of peak demand. That means that Ontario uses its generation and transmission assets to assist Quebec in the winter, and Quebec does the same for Ontario in the summer. This saves the taxpayers and ratepayers in both provinces the expense of building generation capacity that neither needs because the other has it available at their time of peak demand. If you believe the nonsense in this Conservative opposition day motion, they would not want Ontario to earn money by using assets it has in reserve in the winter—rubbish.

The third and fourth senseless clauses in this Conservative opposition day motion deal with the cost to produce emissions-free electricity and seem to suggest that carbon-free electricity is a luxury. Try telling that to the generation of students who now go to school without about one in six needing puffers. Try selling that baloney to seniors who are still alive because the air over the GTA and other Ontario cities is now clean year-round.

In fact, with the benefit of nearly seven years of experience since coal went offline in the GTA, we now

know that emissions-free electricity saves the health system some \$4.5 billion per year. We in Ontario save \$4.5 billion each year, earn money by selling our surplus power, and have already arrived at a clean-power future to which every other North American jurisdiction aspires and, as yet, none other than Ontario has attained. Of course, had the Conservatives continued to govern Ontario after 2003, we would not be there either, and electricity costs would already be higher than they are now and headed for the roof in the future.

Let's look at our neighbouring jurisdictions and see how their electricity production plans stack up with Ontario's. Our geographic bookends, Quebec and Manitoba, have economies and populations that are not growing anywhere near as fast as Ontario, an industrial base not as power-intensive, and both are blessed with surplus hydroelectric power. Both of these provinces have deliberately done exactly what this nuthead Conservative motion advocates against: develop the ability to produce surplus electricity so they can sell that power at a profit to their neighbours.

It's different in the surrounding US states. They're going to lose all of their nuclear capacity. Their light-water reactors are Pickering vintage, designed in the 1950s and built from the 1960s through the 1970s. Though it is technically feasible for the US to refurbish them, it's not the best use of American utility funds, and as they reach the end of their service lifetimes, they'll be decommissioned. None of the other Great Lakes states has plans to replace their nuclear reactors.

Our Great Lakes neighbouring states will lose all their coal-generating capacity. Utilities in the Great Lakes basin in the United States are not building new coal plants. Those in service will gradually be decommissioned as they reach the end of their service lifetimes.

States vary in their commitment to implementing renewable electricity. Like Ontario, there is very little potential for adding additional hydroelectric capacity. The Great Lakes basin states are nowhere near as far along as Ontario is in deploying and integrating renewable energy into the grid.

In the USA, the power grids, in many cases, desperately need the renewal that has happened here in Ontario in the past decade and a half. That means that even if the states to which Ontario profitably sells electricity chose to be more aggressive in their adoption of wind and solar—mostly wind—their grids are not yet properly configured to get power from where it's produced to where it's needed, and the public utility commissions in the various states have not allowed utilities to raise rates so that they can invest in the capital improvements that they so desperately need.

To put this another way, in the last dozen or so years, Ontario bought tomorrow's power system, paid for it with yesterday's money and financed it over its lifetime at interest rates close to zero. In America, they have the opposite challenge: They must play catch-up, thus buying today's power system, paying for it with tomorrow's money—meaning a higher price—and financing it over

its lifetime at interest rates that are already rising. This Conservative opposition day motion wants Ontario to be where the United States is headed. Your government has invested yesterday to secure your electricity future through many tomorrows.

From 2013 to 2015, the net surplus to Ontario electricity ratepayers from trading with the United States was \$850 million. That money helped pay for improvements in Ontario's electricity system and hold down rates. In the years to come, American electrical utilities will be eager customers for Ontario electricity. In Ontario, we connect to more US states than any other province. With a new intertie nearing completion underneath Lake Erie, on the lakebed, Ontario will be able to sell even more power to Michigan, yielding even more profitable export revenue for the province, its people and its electricity ratepayers.

We on this side of the House call upon the Conservative Party to reimburse Ontario ratepayers for the costs of the ideologically driven—and truly stupid and unsuccessful—policies that they enacted while in government. Those errors cost the province a decade of time to fix. Now we in Ontario deal from a position of strength in having the capacity to meet our own power demands and to earn a predictable profit stream for many years to come, selling electricity to our neighbours, many of whom will need much more than what they're buying today as the North American economy grows.

I reject this opposition day motion for being the politically motivated nonsense it is, for being nothing more than Conservative pre-campaign talking points, without any basis in fact, in business or in science. I urge the members of this House to send it down to the defeat it so richly deserves.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mr. Todd Smith: I won't even acknowledge the hogwash that I just heard from the other side of the House.

It is an honour to rise and speak to this opposition day motion put forward by the leader of the official opposition and member for Simcoe North.

It's always entertaining to hear government members get up in the House and talk about how much money they're making off electricity sales, especially since, this morning, the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers stated that the government has lost up to \$1.25 billion on the sale of surplus electricity over the last 21 months. In less than two years, they've lost \$1.25 billion. These are the experts that actually work in this sector, not the spin doctors that sit in these benches for the Liberal government. So \$1.25 billion, in the last 21 months—that's just since January 2016.

The energy minister actually used the phrase "net" in his answer this morning, as though he was trying to explain how this government has managed to put this province in such a ridiculous oversupply situation that we're losing over a billion dollars in less than two years by selling electricity. All that means is that the minister either misspoke or he doesn't know what the word "net" actually means.

After question period, my office spoke with representatives from the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers—the experts—and it turns out that, as they were doing their calculations on this matter, they actually had former officials from the system operator verifying their numbers for them. Now, I know that it's common for this government to ignore the experts—they've done it already again this afternoon. That's how we got into this mess in the first place. But it went to a whole new level today.

The Ontario Society of Professional Engineers estimated that this power is being sold on the export market at less than two cents per kilowatt hour in a lot of cases—less than two cents. Just using the Ontario Energy Board's figures that were included in the Financial Accountability Officer's report that came out this morning, nuclear is at about 6.9 cents per kilowatt hour; hydroelectricity is 5.8 cents per kilowatt hour; wind comes in at 17 cents per kilowatt hour; natural gas at about 20 cents; and solar at about 48 cents because, remember, there are those 80-cent-per-kilowatt-hour contracts that are out there.

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The simplest definition of net revenue is profit after cost. If it's costing us anywhere between 5.8 cents and 48 cents to produce the power, then there's no net revenue. Someone is covering the cost to produce, and that cost to produce isn't being recovered by the revenue gained from the sale. So yes, we're losing money. There's no doubt that we're losing money on the export of power, but the biggest question is why.

This morning, the minister pretended that it was because of the dispatching model that the IESO uses to determine what does and doesn't go on the grid, and he pretended that the opposition was arguing for more expensive sources of electricity, which is demonstrably false. While the overall hydroelectric price, according to the OEB, is 5.8 cents per kilowatt hour, the price for Ontario Power Generation's hydroelectric fleet comes in at 4.4 cents on average. That makes it some of the cheapest power in the province, if not the cheapest power in Ontario.

Interjection: And green.

Mr. Todd Smith: And it's green, carbon free. That's also where the majority of the curtailing occurs inside Ontario Power Generation. The biggest cause for our surplus and our curtailment is actually how we're allocated resources here in Ontario. The majority of our surplus and our curtailment occurs in the shoulder seasons and at night. The reason that is is because that's when electricity demand in Ontario is the lowest: in the spring, in the fall and at night. Typically at those times, the load in Ontario is so low that it can largely be serviced by hydroelectricity and nuclear: our hydro facilities, our water power dams and our nuclear plants.

The problem occurs because those are also the times of year that the wind wants to blow. Now, because you don't control the fuel source with wind power, you don't get to control when it runs. The extent of your control is

the ability to shut it off when it runs and you don't want it to, so you end up exporting or curtailing power. The root cause is not a dispatch problem; it's a procurement problem.

Mr. Jim Wilson: It's the contracts.

Mr. Todd Smith: It's the contract; it's the bad contracts that have been signed. And these contracts aren't just for a couple of years. These contracts are baked in for 20 years.

The generation that's on the grid doesn't line up with Ontario's load profile. The amazing part is that this problem has been growing for years and years, and the government has made no effort to deal with it. We're exporting twice as much energy as we were in 2005, and we're curtailing four times as much as we were in 2010. All of this is the result of mistakes made by the government when they rolled out the Green Energy Act back in 2008-09. That's where the problem comes from. The government stupidly put three no-carbon electricity generating sources in competition with one another, creating a massive redundancy inside the system with no tangible benefit to the environment. Warnings have been coming from the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers, the experts—

Mr. Jim Wilson: And others.

Mr. Todd Smith: —and other groups, for years regarding the system impacts of doing this, particularly with regard to the costs of exports. Those warnings have been ignored. That's why it's important that we talk about it again here today. As the leader of the official opposition said in his lead on this debate, the cost of exports to Ontario's ratepayers is well past the point of unsustainable.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: It is a pleasure for me to rise today on behalf of the people I represent in London West to speak to this opposition day motion that was brought forward by the leader of the Progressive Conservative Party.

Certainly this is an issue that my constituents are very concerned about. They have raised this concern numerous times through emails, phone calls, at town hall meetings that I have held about the ridiculousness of the province paying other jurisdictions to take our oversupply of electricity. However, we see before us in this motion no mention of the fact that much of this oversupply is the result of fixed contracts—fixed private sector contracts—that have been signed with electricity generators, that we are locked into with prices that we have no control over. And that, Speaker, is because this Conservative government thought that privatizing electricity generation was a good idea. They're the ones who broke up the old Ontario Hydro and decided to hive off electricity generation to OPG, and what we have seen in the aftermath of that is a proliferation, an explosion, of private sector contracts that are signed to guarantee profits to private sector generators.

This PC Party believes that the solution to this problem is simply to reimburse Ontario ratepayers. We on

this side of the House, within the Ontario NDP caucus, believe that the solution to this problem is to fix the problem. That's why the Ontario NDP have brought in a comprehensive plan to cut hydro prices. We brought that plan in many months ago. The plan addresses oversupply, among other things, but the centrepiece of that plan really is to return Hydro One to public hands. We know that this was a decision to privatize and that, really, the Conservatives wanted to go in that direction. They wanted to privatize transmission, but they lost their nerve. So they've left it to the Liberals to complete that privatization of the electricity system with the sell-off of Hydro One, which they did not mention anywhere in their platform back in 2014, that this was what they were planning to do. They weren't up front with the taxpayers, the citizens, the voters of this province that if they elected the Liberal government, they would end up privatizing our most valuable public asset, a public asset that means so much to the people of this province, to the businesses of this province. They went ahead and decided to sell off that public utility that we really rely on to further the public interest.

Instead of using electricity to advance the public interest, what we are seeing is that shareholder profits have now become the highest priority for operational decisions of this privatized utility, and that's why we're currently in the midst of another request for a rate increase. Hydro One is looking out for the best interests of the shareholders, and that is what it's supposed to do as a private sector corporation, but we believe that the citizens of this province should be the priority for decisions around how we're going to operate our electricity system. That is why the NDP has brought forward our plan to cut hydro prices.

Speaker, it's interesting: For months people have asked the PCs, "What exactly is your plan?" We haven't seen anything about how the PCs are proposing to address some of these challenges in Ontario's energy system. We had a heads-up about the policy discussions they're going to be having this weekend, and nowhere in those documents is there any reference to some kind of comprehensive plan as to how they're going to deal with Ontario's energy challenges.

Instead we see this motion today, which I guess helps differentiate the PCs from the Liberals, because we did hear last month, in fact, that the PCs are going to go full steam ahead with the energy plan that the Liberals have put forward, which is going to cost the citizens of this province \$40 billion over 30 years in interest costs.

1650

I've heard the Liberals talk about, "Oh, it's just like refinancing a mortgage." Well, Speaker, it's not refinancing a mortgage. At least when you refinance a mortgage, you have a house at the end of it. With what the Liberals have proposed, it's simply shifting the costs of financing the mismanagement of our hydro system onto future generations. And we recently heard that the Liberals paid \$4 billion additionally to do that shifting of the cost, to do the accounting that would enable them to

shift those costs, and they were quite willing to impose those costs on the people of this province.

Speaker, we have a big challenge in this province with poverty. We have a big challenge in this province with health care. I want to talk for a couple of minutes about how some of these challenges are affecting the people whom I represent in London West.

Recently, in September, we had the release of the census data from Statistics Canada, which is very useful data in terms of thinking ahead about policy and where some of the gaps are and what kinds of things we need to change. The census data on median household income showed that my community, the London CMA, now has the second-lowest household income among any other large Ontario city, the third lowest among any other large city in Canada.

Compared to the rest of Canada, our household income has dropped 2% over the period since the last census. The median household income in the rest of Canada has risen almost 11% over that decade. We in London are struggling. We are struggling with issues around poverty, around the number of people who are living on low income, around the number of children who are living in low income. Almost one quarter of all of the children who live in the London CMA are living in low-income homes. That is a completely unacceptable rate of child poverty when you think about what that means for families and for these children who want to get the best start in life.

I wanted to share with you some of the stories that have been brought to my attention by Londoners who are struggling with poverty and low incomes. Marissa Humphrey shared her story with CBC London in September. She said that she's trying to live on an income of less than \$30,000. She says that housing is a major concern. She says that in the winter she tries not to turn on the heat to save on electricity because that is the only way that Marissa Humphrey can make ends meet.

Another Londoner, Becky, shared her story. She lost her job. She ended up on Ontario Works. She gets a housing benefit from Ontario Works of \$495 and is forced to pay rent of \$775 because that is the going rate for rent in London. She said that out of her savings and her Ontario Works benefits, she has to pay for gas, hydro, phone and the Internet. And she asks a very valid question. She asks, "How are you supposed to do better for yourself when you can't even have a house, when you can't even make your rent and hydro rates are so insane?"

Speaker, the mismanagement of our hydro system by this Liberal government has created incredible hardship for people in my community. I want to share the story of Dianne and Travis Rump, who came to my office just a couple of weeks ago, at the end of October. Dianne was injured at work, was no longer able to do her job, and went on ODSP. They have six children. They are struggling to pay high hydro bills in the home that they rent. As a result, they have had their hydro cut off several times, and this has a domino effect on the decisions that

they make about how they are going to allocate their scarce resources. They have to make decisions about paying rent, paying the hydro bills, or putting food on the table for their six children. Unfortunately, because of the financial pressures that they've been facing, they are now in arrears of over \$1,000.

For many, many people in this province, trying to figure out how they're going to address those arrears as well as keep up in the future with ongoing hydro costs—the challenges appear insurmountable to people like Dianne and Travis and to many other citizens in this province.

Speaker, I also want to talk about health care. Earlier this month, on November 13, our leader was in London. We shared some horror stories from London Health Sciences Centre about a family who waited in the ER for 16 hours. The brother in the family had attempted suicide. They ended up in the hallway for four days, after waiting in the hallway for 16 hours. Unfortunately, this was not a unique circumstance. This happens regularly in my community of London West.

At the same time, I want to remind MPPs who are here today that last March the NDP released information about the hydro bill that London Health Sciences Centre is paying. London Health Sciences Centre's hydro costs went up almost \$2 million in the last six years. Between 2010 and 2016, they were able to reduce their hydro usage by 13%; however, they saw their costs increase 29%. The requirement to pay those increasing hydro bills means that the services that are already stretched impossibly thin are pressured even more.

Speaker, New Democrats believe that we need to make some significant changes to our hydro system. If we are going to address some of these challenges, we need to look at many more things than simply reimbursing Ontario ratepayers the cost incurred by the surplus electricity. We need to look at fixing the problems. We need to look at thoroughly going through, with a fine-tooth comb, all of the bad contracts that have been signed thanks to the PC government that started the privatization of electricity generation. We need to look at whether it makes sense to renegotiate or discontinue some of those contracts or maybe cancel them—but let's find out the financial costs of cancelling them first.

We need to bring Hydro One back into public hands. I know that the Conservatives and the Liberal members opposite have heard as much as we have heard on this side of the House from constituents who are opposed to the privatization of Hydro One, who understand that it is a disastrous decision that completely undermines this province's ability to use our electricity system to advance the public good; to further the public interest; to ensure a stable, reliable source of revenue from a dividend that is generated when electricity is in public hands; and to use those revenues to support schools, to support health care, to support expanding infrastructure, to enhance our transit system—to achieve all of these public goals that we have as a society. But, no, this Liberal government wants to proceed with privatizing Hydro One. We know

this Conservative caucus is completely in favour of privatization. They're the ones who started it.

I'm sorry, Speaker, but this solution that the Conservatives have brought before us today is completely inadequate to address the real problems in the system.

1700

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Before we continue debate, it gives me great pleasure, and I'd like to bring it to the attention of those in the Legislative Assembly, that we are honoured to have in the members' gallery former parliamentarian Bud Wildman. Mr. Wildman was the member for Algoma in the 30th, 31st, 32nd, 33rd, 34th, 35th and 36th Parliaments. Welcome back to Queen's Park.

Further debate?

Ms. Laurie Scott: I'm happy to have the opportunity to speak to our opposition day motion calling on the government to reimburse Ontario ratepayers the cost of the loss incurred by exporting surplus electricity to the United States.

This is a very important issue and yet another example of this government's total mismanagement of the hydro file. Sadly, I hold out very little hope that this government will listen to our latest call for them to stop hurting the people of Ontario with their misguided policies, which only help them and their corporate friends at the expense of all the people of Ontario.

The fact is, this government likes to talk over the hard-working people of Ontario on hydro, telling them that they don't know what they're talking about when they question their policies. This is really shameful, because no one knows what a disaster the hydro system has become under this government better than the hard-working ratepayers in small towns and rural communities across the province, just like the people in my riding of Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock.

Last spring, I sent out a newsletter to all my constituents that included a survey about their priorities—I'm holding some up, Mr. Speaker. Let me tell you, I have never before seen such a huge response to a newsletter survey. Hundreds and hundreds of my constituents replied with detailed messages, most of them focused on one particular issue. Can anybody guess what that issue was?

Interjection: Hydro.

Ms. Laurie Scott: You bet. It was the outrageous hydro rates this government is directly responsible for.

Let me tell you how Fred from Bobcaygeon put it. "The Ontario Liberal government has increased rates 100% in less than 12 years. It took 100 years to get to the rates we had in 2005! The Liberal government must go!" I couldn't agree with Fred more, Mr. Speaker. I hate to break it to him, but the rates have actually gone up over 300%.

These increases have been more than double the national average, and Ontario's electricity prices are already the highest in Canada and among the highest in North America. The only way to explain the situation is

massive incompetence on the part of this government—no question.

Many of those who responded to my survey also mentioned the outrageous salaries being paid to Hydro One executives. For example, Chris from Minden noted that "ridiculous salaries are being handed out to already wealthy executives, while the rest of the population suffers. Will you (the government) ever care about those who are struggling?" We on this side have asked the government these questions again and again. Sadly, I think the government has proven that it doesn't care and will never care.

Next, we have a question from Jim and Kathie from Norland, who ask, "Why is it necessary to have incredibly high hydro costs when we see it sold at lower prices to the USA and in some cases given away?" That's a very good question, Mr. Speaker. It's exactly the question we are asking during this opposition day debate.

As my colleagues have mentioned, independent energy experts have put the cost of producing the power that is being exported to the United States at more than a billion dollars for 2016 and more than \$840 million for the first nine months of 2017. What this means is that the government stands to lose between \$340 million and \$675 million per year on the export of our electricity. That's disgraceful. I can't say it enough. It's disgraceful, Mr. Speaker.

The government has shown it has no problem throwing money around at failed green energy projects and cancelled gas plants, and now they've shown they have no problem subsidizing the energy sent to our neighbours to the south. Meanwhile, Ontario ratepayers are left with the bill for these expensive mistakes, many of them barely able to get by as a result of the ridiculous hydro rates they pay.

This has to stop, and it can't stop soon enough.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

M^{me} France Gélinas: It is rather interesting to listen to both sides of the House here talk about our hydro system. I must say that when the Liberals stand up and talk about, "We have made our hydro system reliable"—maybe for some parts of the province, but not for all parts of the province.

Let me tell you what it looks like if you live in my part of the province; let me tell you what it looks like if you live in Gogama. If you live in Gogama, starting this Thursday, you would have seen that the power in Gogama went off for 19 hours. If you live in Mattagami First Nation, which is close to Gogama, your power would have been completely off for 24 hours. That was on Thursday. On Saturday, they had power that would flick on and off constantly. It went completely to blackout 11 times. That's just on Saturday. Sunday was no better. When they talked about the brownouts from when the PCs were in power, but that there's none of this since the Liberals, I say listen to the people of Ontario.

On Sunday it was the same. Monday, the power went off at 9 a.m. It was brought back on at 2 o'clock in the

afternoon. It went back out at 4:45 p.m. and came back at 5:15 p.m. That was for yesterday. For today, things didn't get any better. The power went off at 10:30 this morning and just came back at about 3 o'clock this afternoon.

It is to the point that I ask my constituents from many parts of my riding to keep a journal as to how many times the power goes off, when it goes off and when it comes back on. I take those journals and I send them to Hydro One; I send them to the Minister of Energy.

I can tell you that—his title is senior external relations adviser for Hydro One. He had this explanation as to why the power goes on and off: It's apparently because there are trees in northern Ontario and that it snowed. Really? We have trees in northern Ontario and it snows in November? Only to a CEO making \$4.6 million a year could that be a surprise. We have known this; we have always known that. Gerry Talbot, a resident of Gogama, writes to me and says, "Winter has not even started yet. We understand that there could be power outages that occur, but it is happening almost every day." Claude goes on to say, "I have spent \$85 in gas in the last five days" because they have to have a backup gas generator, "which is almost as much as my hydro bill."

You'll understand, Speaker, that many people in my riding heat with wood, and we try to use electricity as little as we can. So when the Liberals say, "Oh, we fixed the system so that it would be good," I would love this to be true. I want the Ministry of Energy and I want Hydro One to listen, to go out to Gogama, to go out to Mattagami and to fix this so that those little journals of daily power outages—we're talking brownouts, we're talking blackouts. It should not be happening in a province like Ontario, especially in northern Ontario, where we produce so much of the greenest, cleanest, cheapest hydro-electricity.

I want this fixed, Speaker. I want to be able to be like everybody else in this chamber who is proud to say that our electricity system has been fixed and we have no more brownouts. Well, that may be true for Toronto, but it is not true for northeastern Ontario. It is not true for the good people that I represent in Nickel Belt, and I want this fixed. I hope I'm clear on that, and I hope that the ministry and Hydro One are listening and will act.

Coming back to what the motion was talking about, I want to talk about my previous leader, Mr. Howard Hampton. I don't know if you've ever read his book, Speaker; it's called *Public Power: The Fight for Publicly Owned Electricity*. The book was published in 2003, and basically it talks about how "deregulating electricity prices and the privatizing publicly owned power system assets has been an economic disaster in North America and elsewhere. Instead of the promised abundance of lower priced power, states and provinces that have embraced deregulation and privatization are now experiencing astonishing price spikes and unexpected shortages. Taking us from the very beginnings of the electricity industry in the 1880s right up to the present day, Howard Hampton vividly recounts the dramatic political struggles between public and private power in both Canada and the

United States, a moving story that links Ontario's Sir Adam Beck, founder of North America's largest public power system, with Franklin D. Roosevelt, who established the still public New York Power Authority and Tennessee Valley Authority, and Cleveland mayor Dennis Kucinich, who sacrificed his political career rather than sell his city's municipally owned electric utility."

If you've ever had any doubt that public power is the way to go, I fully recommend you read this book from Howard Hampton. It will make a lot of things clear.

But we don't have public power in Ontario anymore. We all know that it all started with a Conservative government. The Conservatives did what Conservatives do: They privatized. They started privatizing the production of our electricity. At the time, the Liberals—the Liberals were in opposition with us in the NDP—sort of supported progressives and argued strongly against the privatization of our electricity system, calling it a "vital public asset," very much using the words and the idea that the NDP is still supporting, that our electricity system belongs in public hands.

Then they got elected; then they got into power. Although they had spoken quite eloquently about the need to remain in public hands, they privatized. But they won't even say it out loud. In their words, they did not privatize Hydro One; they—what do they say?—broadened the ownership. What does "broaden the ownership" mean, Speaker? All of us own it. There are already 13.5 million owners of Hydro One. How could you broaden this?

Ms. Cindy Forster: Now we're buying coal plants.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Yes.

When you are so ashamed of what you're doing that you can't even speak it out loud, then you should not be doing it. If you're not able to say, "We privatized Hydro One," when you have to use weasel words like "we broadened the ownership," then you know that you're doing wrong. If you were proud of privatizing Hydro One, you would use the word, but you don't. You use weasel words.

But the end result is the same. The end result is that all of this money that we have invested to fix our hydro system was to sell it. Now that it has been sold to a private company that pays its CEO \$4.6 million a year—I'm laughing, but I'm laughing because this is—

Ms. Cindy Forster: Obscene.

M^{me} France Gélinas: —obscene. How could it be that next to us in Quebec, Hydro-Québec has—not only does the CEO of Hydro-Québec oversee the production, the transmission, the distribution of their electricity system, but he does that at one-tenth the price of the CEO of Hydro One. Hydro One only handles the transmission. We still have other CEOs, paid in the millions of dollars, who do the production, who do the distribution and who do the other parts of the hydro system. We are not getting a good deal.

The motion that the Conservatives brought today that talks about the bad deals with our extra power—they are

absolutely right. The number of bad deals that have been signed by this Liberal government is shameful, and their motion speaks to that. That's about the only part of the motion that I will agree with. But the idea that we will now borrow from the taxpayers to pay back the loss that we've incurred on those bad contracts makes no sense. At the end of the day, there's only one taxpayer, and whether I pay my hydro bill or I pay my taxes, I will still be the one paying. I don't see what will be achieved through the motion that has been put forward.

The Liberals are, I would say, playing with the same playbook when they say it is okay to incur \$40 billion in interest charges so that they can postpone payment, and when they say it is okay to incur \$4 billion for the sole purpose of getting this money off of the province's ledger so that they can say they have a balanced budget. All of those deals, all of those contracts, are not in the best interest of the ratepayers, they're not be the best interest of the taxpayers—

Ms. Cindy Forster: Who are the same people.

M^{me} France Gélinas: —who are the exact same people—and they're not in the best interest of our province. We all know that a public electricity system can be used to bring economic development in all sorts of parts of our province. I speak for northeastern Ontario. We have an abundance of rivers. We have an abundance of clean, green, renewable hydro energy. But what do we do with it, Speaker? Do we invite companies to come to the north and bring prosperity? No, not at all. We build great, big transmission lines so we send our power down to Toronto.

We can do better than that, Speaker. We can have a public system that is there to serve all of us, to serve the public good. Electricity is not a luxury. Everybody needs it. Ask the people of Gogama how much fun it is when you have a blackout 11 times on a Saturday. Ask them what kind of power outlets and all of this you have to have on all of your electronics when your TV, your microwave and everything else that is electric goes out 10, 11 times a day.

Electricity is a necessity. It should be treated as a public good, and signing contracts that make us lose money with private providers goes completely against anything that respects the public good. We will not be supporting the motion from the PCs because borrowing from the taxpayer is not the solution.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: It's my pleasure to add my voice to the debate today. I really want to focus in on what matters in Huron-Bruce and how their concerns absolutely support our leader's, Patrick Brown's, motion today. I want to thank my colleagues who have already made very good points today.

The reality is that Ontario ratepayers should be irate about the \$1.25 billion per year in electricity that we send to the United States at rock-bottom prices. The results of this Liberal government's record on hydro prices are absolutely heart-wrenching when we know and see the

impacts in our ridings. We have heard countless stories of businesses that have packed up and left Ontario, and one key reason is their hydro prices. We have heard stories of Ontarians who cannot keep their lights on or heat their homes, and we've heard stories about community hubs, like arenas, curling rinks, small-town grocery stores—pillars of our communities—at risk of closing down because of out-of-control hydro bills.

1720

What is the government's solution, Speaker? To kick the can down the road, to borrow billions of dollars and to incur tens of billions of dollars in interest and make this a problem for the next generation. On top of that, American states are advertising to Ontario companies to relocate their businesses south of the border, and to do so, they offer cheaper electricity as an incentive. We heard Patrick Brown, the leader of the PC Party of Ontario, speak of that very thing earlier this afternoon, and it looks like competing businesses south of the border are benefiting from Ontario's excess energy, but unfortunately, they're not paying the same prices. Speaker, that's just not right.

Everyone in the PC caucus knows this, and we hope that everyone on all sides passes this motion and gives Ontarians the true relief they need. Now that is the fair thing to do.

I was kind of taken aback this morning. The energy minister had the gall to call our position political spin. But I ask, if we truly got our electricity at the cheapest cost at the cheapest time, then why on earth have our hydro rates skyrocketed? Maybe it's because we have built too much generation capacity. So maybe it's actually the Minister of Energy who is guilty of spin.

For instance, if I bought six cars but only drove the car with the cheapest fuel or the best fuel economy every day, that doesn't change the fact that I still bought five cars that I didn't need. Meanwhile, because I have extra cars on hand, my neighbour is really happy because I let him use one of my cars at a loss. That's what's happening with our energy today in Ontario. Sadly, in Ontario's case, it wasn't too many cars that we bought; I have to suggest to you that it was too many industrial wind turbines forced on unwilling communities.

In my riding, the great riding of Huron-Bruce, the cost is not only \$1.25 billion per year in wasted energy going to the States, but it's also the altered landscape and the health impacts that have plagued the residents of my riding. This government still has not brought forward sufficient regulations for setbacks or for infrasound testing. Based on the lack of action we have seen, it looks like the Premier has not admitted or accepted any of this, or, worse, she just chooses not to care.

Again, Speaker, I would like to remind the Premier that the cost for the Liberal green energy boondoggle is not just hundreds of millions of dollars. There is also a human cost, like the health impacts being felt throughout my riding. Families have felt a very real human cost from these industrial wind turbines, and the Premier and this Liberal government should not only reimburse the

ratepayers for their mistakes; they should also be doing everything in their power to mitigate health concerns.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

M^{me} Nathalie Des Rosiers: Ça me fait plaisir de me lever ici pour répondre à la motion de l'opposition.

I want to say, first, that I have been elected now for a year. Therefore, this debate comes a little bit after having been here for a year and having had the opportunity, because it has been an important issue for Ontarians, to dig into this energy file. I'm also very pleased that for the last three weeks or so, I have been appointed PA to the Minister of Energy, so I had the opportunity again to go deeper into this file.

The first thing I want to say, évidemment, is that we care. I think the idea that there is an absence of caring here does not reflect at all the values on this side of the House. We brought in a 25% reduction on energy bills that applies to everyone. We also expanded all the programs that allow businesses and individuals to access and pay their bills more easily.

Je veux aussi parler un peu de—c'est assez fascinant de lire cette motion qui ne cite qu'une partie de l'agenda de la société des ingénieurs.

I had the opportunity to read what the professional engineers said this morning, and I think it's important to put their comments in context. They are inviting a new innovation, which is the interruptible retail electricity market, to use some of Ontario's surplus clean energy. In a way, they are participating in the great program that the LTEP is allowing, which is inviting technological innovation to reduce costs throughout the system. The second part that I think is important to note in the society of professional engineers quote is that they say it is imperative to depoliticize the debate.

I think it's very important that Ontarians understand well how the electricity system works and what the investments that were made in the electricity system have meant for Ontario. I won't repeat all of the good explanations that my colleague from Mississauga—Streetsville has given, but I will explain a little bit more succinctly exactly what's going on.

We had to invest in the system. The system was crumbling. You have a choice: You can choose to invest in coal, or you can decide you're not going to invest in coal and then you can decide to remove coal. The investment to reduce and to eliminate coal from the energy supply is something that all Ontarians should be very proud of. It was the right thing to do, and it also has allowed some significant reduction in our health costs. There are no more smog days. That's an important aspect of the better Ontario that we live in.

The second part that was important to do for the system was to make it more reliable. I hear that it may not be perfect everywhere in Ontario, but certainly we have seen a reduction of the widespread blackouts and brownouts. A brownout is when a company decides to undercut and stop its operation because it fears that it won't have enough electricity to carry it out. That's a real

cost to our productivity. So the importance of having a reliable system cannot be underestimated.

Finally, I think it's important—and this is where I wanted to go: I want to continue to work toward a more affordable system. For the next four years, we know that the rates have been fixed and they won't increase. They have decreased by 25%, and they won't increase by more than the rate of inflation. That gives us time to continue to look at reducing the costs in the system.

That brings me to some of the very good innovations that are being put forth in the long-term energy plan. I had the privilege of attending the release of the plan and to hear people talking about what it meant for Ontario. This plan has legitimacy and has credibility because it is the result not only of long studies but also of in-depth consultation with all facets of the sector.

Let's summarize a little bit now what reliability means for our system. Reliability means that you have to have the capacity to respond to peak demand, not just average demand. You have to have the capacity to respond when everybody is turning on their oven, when all industries are out there wanting to use energy. It's very important. It's the responsibility of the government to ensure that you have the capacity within the system to respond to peak demand. This, I think, was the incentive and the imperative that we were trying to do.

All jurisdictions import and export. They all do it to satisfy their needs. Ontario is no different than the others. What we have, though, is that now we are not solely an importer of energy, and that's a good thing. We don't want to be solely an importer of energy because then you're at the mercy of other jurisdictions changing their price plan, changing their priorities, and trying to extract a higher cost from you.

1730

In a way, having decided to invest in a system to have greater capacity to meet peak demand is crucial for the Ontario economy. I'm actually very proud that we are in that position right now. Now, if we continue to ensure these investments in the grid and in the electricity system, it has been very worthwhile. We want to continue to be in that position to actually respond to our demand.

The long-term energy plan that was released recently provides an array of options. It is entitled *Delivering Fairness and Choice* because it does aim to provide more choices to the consumer. It's an exciting time in the energy sector because there is so much technological innovation. We have to be in a position to leverage these technological innovations, and I believe that it's only by having a plan that you actually can leverage technological innovation. If you don't have a plan, you don't know what's going on and you can't move forward. The ability to have a plan that looks at what the demand could look like in 20 or 30 years is important to all of us.

I am very pleased to have in front of me an assessment of what could possibly be the demands of the Ontario sector, the Ontario economy for the next little while. There are some uncertainties. We don't know how fast

some electrification could take place. We don't know how much, either. Indeed, there could be some people going off the grid. But we know and we assess here that there will probably be some opportunities for new innovations in the system.

We have decided, and I think that's a good thing, to be somewhat agnostic as to which sources of energy will be used. We're going to let the market compete to deliver the best price for consumers. Actually, where we are, I think that's probably the right thing to do. We're not going to presume that wind or solar will be better. They are now all able to compete because they now all have the technology to actually deliver something additional to the consumer.

Let me continue to express how important it is that we recognize the way in which our system has been improved and the way in which we are giving to Ontario's economy and to Ontarians generally a system that they can be proud of, a system that is clean and that does not rely on coal. It puts us at the forefront of the sustainable environmental efforts across the world. It also puts us at an important juncture where we are able to reduce our emissions. An important aspect of being in Ontario today is to recognize our responsibility toward the environment. I'm very proud that we have decided not to rely on coal anymore.

I also want to say that I am proud that we have a system that has invested to make sure that there are reliable aspects. In the LTEP, in the long-term energy plan, what I like a lot is that we talk about indigenous partnerships. We talk about extending our transmission lines with the indigenous community to ensure that the northern communities that are not served and that are served by diesel being dropped in to them now can connect with the grid. That's an important aspect for all Ontarians, but particularly for our responsibility toward indigenous people. I'm proud of the fact that it is done by having them as real partners who will benefit from it, control it, and be partners in the business of it.

Other aspects that are interesting in the long-term energy plan refer to the consumer choices that are being allowed by the new technology. That, I think, will allow all of us probably to get out of time-of-use and make better choices that correspond to our own values. Not everybody has the same lifestyle. People who live in Toronto and maybe work all day and arrive very late at night won't have the same needs as somebody who lives in her house and wants to watch TV all day or do other things—do her washing and so on—and many shift workers as well. So it's important to create more flexibility in the system for the consumer, and I think that's what the long-term energy plan aims to deliver. I think that's an important step, and I'm very happy that we have done that.

Another aspect that I think is particularly important for our energy is the idea that we want to continue to protect consumers. The Ontario Energy Board, which is the authority responsible for assessing rates and for delivering and framing the debate, ensuring that the interests

of consumers are kept at the top of mind, will be empowered to continue to do its good work, and I think that's very important for consumers all over Ontario.

I think the objective, certainly, that we have is that we want to protect consumers and ensure that they have access to reliable and green energy. I think this is particularly important to the Ontario economy because it is also a commitment to our sustainable environment. I think we know on this side of the House that it's important to ensure that all Ontarians are able to participate in the economy. We want to create not only the ability for them to participate by having access to education and by having a fair wage, but also by ensuring that, indeed, they can have access to clean, reliable energy to do whatever they are wanting to do, whatever they desire to do, and whatever it is their ability to do.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I appreciate the opportunity to join in this conversation for the next five or six minutes. I have to say, Speaker, that if I were to jump to the end of the story, it would be to reiterate the story we heard from a couple of the greenhouse operators in your own area when we toured there together. The greenhouse operators talked about the fact that they needed to double the size of their operations, and you wonder what that means in terms. These are massive greenhouses that grow fruits and vegetables all year long. We met up with them, but they couldn't get a good power deal from the province of Ontario.

A couple years later, we met up with them at the vegetable growers' lobby day here at Queen's Park, and I asked one of them, "Last time we saw each other a couple of years ago, you talked about the fact that you were going to double the size of your greenhouse. Did you ever do it?" And of course the answer was, "Well, yes, I did. In fact, we spent \$100 million"—so now we know the scope of what they were talking about—"doubling the size of our greenhouse, but we did it in Ohio." That is just fascinating, that they could not get power at a price they could afford in Ontario, so they go to do it in Ohio, where—think about it, Speaker—as we now know, we pay Ohio to take our surplus power, and they come and eat our lunch and steal our manufacturers. That's the bizarre side of all of this.

I was reading *Niagara This Week*, and I had to chuckle at the last couple of sentences. It was the energy minister bragging about how great a job he has done here in Ontario. He says, "By investing billions into modernizing its hydro system ... Ontario ... now has an energy system that's reliable and clean." That is what our minister said. "We are the jurisdiction that led the way," said Thibeault. "Everybody else is trying to figure out how to do it. We've already done it."

Well, Speaker, I had to chuckle, because I know the Premier and this minister said that they spent \$35 billion—one of them said \$35 billion, and the other said \$50 billion; they can't agree on how much they spent—on modernizing the system. Let me tell you what they

actually spent that money on. I'll call chapter one "frills and shiny baubles." They spent \$2 billion on smart meters that we know don't work. They spent \$1.2 billion on a smart grid. They spent \$600 million on the coal plant write-off—that's before they got back into coal in the States—two and a half billion dollars on conservation and \$1.1 billion on cancelling the gas plants. That's about \$7.4 billion of the money that they said was to build up their system. So far, none of that has done anything to build up the system, and we're only at \$7 billion now.

1740

We call it unreliable and intermittent power. They spent \$10.2 billion on wind generation, \$5.2 billion on solar generation and \$5 billion for transmission to get power connections for those far-flung wind and solar projects to bring the power to where it's needed. When the minister says we spent billions modernizing the hydro system, so far, none of this has modernized it. They say they upgraded the transmission system, but it's kind of a stretch goal. They did spend money on transmission, but not to build a system; this was to bring power from the power lines at the wind and solar projects that are far-flung. That was \$20.4 billion. Together, that's almost \$28 billion so far.

Then, of course, we have their other photo op generation. That's another \$4 billion.

A good value for money was the Bruce nuclear refurbishment, at \$3.4 billion.

Speaker, this proves that the bulk of the money did not go toward what they say, "the cost of the rebuild." It went to intermittent and unreliable wind and solar projects, just like the Auditor General—whom they continue to disparage—tells us it did, and they're unable to deliver generation when the wind isn't blowing and the sun's not shining.

I heard the new parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Energy speak. Here are a couple of facts that probably she should look at and a couple of websites she can go to. I've discussed the reliability system many times before.

I want you to go to Blackout Tracker Annual Report, a very important international system. Blackout Tracker Annual Report revealed the number of Ontario outages increased by 275% from just 2012 to 2015. That's the time they told us they were fixing this broken system, as they keep saying.

In the Auditor General's 2015 annual report, she revealed, "Most of the increase in what consumers pay for electricity has come from generation" costs, which account for 60%. Generation costs increased 74%.

Again, it's not to rebuild this system, as they keep saying; it's to put into their pet projects and their ideological projects.

What happened? As a direct result of having among the highest all-in electricity rates in North America, we not only have lost businesses in Ontario, two very prominent businesses have not come to Ontario. Google announced their first-ever Canadian data centre—heavy users of electricity.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Where did they go?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: They went to the province of Quebec. Google cited they went to Quebec because Ontario has the highest rates.

I end with Amazon. I'm not talking about their new headquarters, but Amazon opened their first-ever data centre in Canada.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Where?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Where? The province of Quebec, citing the high energy rates in Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mr. Arthur Potts: The extraordinary thing about this debate is that the report by OSPE that came out this morning, which forms the basis of the criticism we're hearing from the other side, was actually an incredible opportunity that the engineers were identifying in the province of Ontario.

I appreciate the remarks of the member for Ottawa—Vanier, who says to depoliticize debate. They see an opportunity. Where they see criticism, the engineers of this province see an opportunity, an opportunity to use clean, green, surplus power to make carbon-displacing fuels, such as hydrogen—which you can then put into the natural gas system and use for transportation—and transform the manufacturing processes in this province that use methane-generated hydro, which is highly carbon-intensive. This is an opportunity, not a criticism.

It just demonstrates how little the members of the other side—the official opposition—understand the power generation system in this province. Not only could they not run the power generation system in this province; they couldn't even run a greengrocer's.

Think about the analogy, Speaker. You couldn't run a greengrocer. The greengrocer puts out a whole bunch of fruits and vegetables to sell to people at the premium price because they're premium products. But as the day goes on, it's going to be overnight. They don't want that, so they discount the price.

They would say that the guy lost money because he paid this much and he had to sell for this much. But what he really did was recover the money, getting rid of a product before it spoiled. Energy will spoil if you don't use it right away. We are making money. Our system is in place. These guys know absolutely nothing about this process.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mr. Monte McNaughton: There have been many disastrous policy decisions on the part of this government that have led to Ontario paying more for electricity than anywhere else in North America. It's not just the opposition saying it; it's every expert and watchdog you can think of who backs that up.

Sadly, it's not the Liberal government who has paid the price for these poor decisions, schemes and exploits; it's the people and families of the province of Ontario. The people in this province have paid and continue to pay a heavy price for poor Liberal policy decisions on the energy file.

This has taken a new turn in my riding of Lambton–Kent–Middlesex, where, in addition to staggering hydro bills, there is a new price being paid by some families. The government has told them that they are expected to forfeit access to clean, safe well water. Mr. Speaker, 16 families in north Kent are now unable to drink water from their wells, which had produced clean, clear water for decades. This morning, I delivered to the Minister of the Environment a sample of the murky brown dredge that is now being drawn from those same wells since construction of massive turbines began nearby.

It is time that this government was accountable. The disastrous Liberal and NDP Green Energy Act has done enough damage. They owe my constituents answers about what it's doing to their drinking water. Construction of turbines should not be allowed to proceed until the government carries out heavy-metal testing and gets a handle on what a full impact of these useless wind farms will be.

On March 8 of this year, a renewable energy application submission was made to the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change to develop a wind turbine installation along the banks of Otter Creek. Part of this planned industrial wind turbine development will be within one kilometre of suburban streets in Wallaceburg.

On September 29, 2016, when the Otter Creek project was merely an idea in the mind of its majority off-shore investor, I pointed out to the Minister of Energy that further progress on this project should cease, both for environmental reasons and because there's no requirement for further renewable energy development.

There was no discernible reason to move forward. Who does it benefit? Had the minister cancelled the two projects in question—Otter Creek and North Kent 1—by the ministry's own estimates, the long-term savings would amount to more than \$570 million.

Most of the wind turbines in Lambton–Kent–Middlesex stand 130 metres from the ground to the top of the blade. The proposed towers and blades for Otter Creek will take that height to 195.7 metres, Mr. Speaker. To help you understand, that is the distance from the front steps of the Legislative Building, south past to the limits of Queen's Park Crescent and further south halfway down to College Street.

Otter Creek flows through some of the best agricultural land in our country—land which, after the construction of industrial wind turbines, will never again raise an ear of corn or a stem of soy beans. I'm surprised that the Minister of Agriculture raises no objections.

Otter Creek is an environmentally sensitive area. The area is home to 24 species of fish, mussels and reptiles which are classified nationally or provincially as species at risk. Otter Creek is also a major flyway for migratory birds and waterfowl. I am amazed that the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry raises no objections.

The Otter Creek industrial wind turbine development will require the foundations of its towers to be supported by steel pilings driven into bedrock. The bedrock in this

particular area includes a band of Kettle Point black shale, and it is this band that carries the water of the local aquifer, which fills the water wells for my constituents. There are legitimate concerns and fears that pile driving will cause the water in these wells to become turbid and im potable. I am astounded that the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change and this government are willing to continue jeopardizing the local water supply.

The government must listen to what we've raised here today. There is no need to continue building more wind turbine projects in the province of Ontario. It's raising issues when it comes to environmental and health concerns for my constituents and further raising the cost of electricity. I hope that the Liberals in this case will support the call of our leader, Patrick Brown, to make energy more affordable in the province of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Mr. Brown has moved opposition day number 4. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. There will be a 10-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1752 to 1802.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Members, please take your seats.

Mr. Brown has moved opposition day motion number 4. All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Jones, Sylvia	Smith, Todd
Bailey, Robert	McDonnell, Jim	Thompson, Lisa M.
Brown, Patrick	McNaughton, Monte	Walker, Bill
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Miller, Norm	Wilson, Jim
Clark, Steve	Munro, Julia	Yakabuski, John
Coe, Lorne	Pettapiece, Randy	Yurek, Jeff
Fedeli, Victor	Romano, Ross	
Harris, Michael	Scott, Laurie	

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): All those opposed to the motion will please rise one and time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Albanese, Laura	Dong, Han	Mauro, Bill
Anderson, Granville	Duguid, Brad	McGarry, Kathryn
Baker, Yvan	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	McMahon, Eleanor
Ballard, Chris	Forster, Cindy	Moridi, Reza
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Fraser, John	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Bradley, James J.	Gélinas, France	Naqvi, Yasir
Chan, Michael	Hoggarth, Ann	Potts, Arthur
Chiarelli, Bob	Hoskins, Eric	Qaadri, Shafiq
Colle, Mike	Hunter, Mitzie	Rinaldi, Lou
Coteau, Michael	Jaczek, Helena	Sandals, Liz
Crack, Grant	Kiwala, Sophie	Sattler, Peggy
Damerla, Dipika	Lalonde, Marie-France	Sousa, Charles
Del Duca, Steven	Leal, Jeff	Thibeault, Glenn
Delaney, Bob	Malhi, Harinder	Wong, Soo
Des Rosiers, Nathalie	Mangat, Amrit	Zimmer, David
Dhillon, Vic	Martins, Cristina	
Dickson, Joe	Matthews, Deborah	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 22; the nays are 49.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I declare the motion lost.

Motion negatived.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Pursuant to standing order 38, the question that this House do now adjourn is deemed to have been made.

I will give the Legislature 45 seconds to vacate if you choose not to listen to the late show.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

HOME CARE

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): The member from Huron–Bruce has expressed dissatisfaction with the answer to a question given by the Minister of Health. I will now give the member from Huron–Bruce up to five minutes to debate the matter and, in this case, the parliamentary assistant may reply for up to five minutes.

I turn it over to the member from Huron–Bruce.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the time that you've given me today to speak and follow up on my question from last Tuesday. I asked the Premier a simple yes-or-no question: "Will the Premier do the right thing and release all of the correspondence that her office had with the SEIU and all other relevant stakeholders ahead of the home care changes announced in October?" Speaker, the answer that I received from the Premier, as you're well aware, was not satisfactory.

I asked a very specific question, and I even specified that this question was about ethics, not the merits of the Liberal plan. Yet the Premier continued on and spoke about the merits of her government's decision to secretly create this new agency. I leave it to the member opposite to please speak to the ethics of this matter and to answer a simple question: Will the government release the details of all the consultations they held prior to announcing that they will create a new secret home-care agency?

It's very important to answer this question because, time and time again, the Wynne Liberals have eroded public confidence. Be it from offering cushy green energy contracts to donors to offering appointments to would-be nominees to back out, these Liberals just manage to find ways to break down trust with everyday Ontarians.

Speaker, it's about trust. As I said, every day they have given Ontarians a reason to not trust them, and the sad reality is that this government has built up a reputation for rewarding insiders. In this case, the links appear to be much too strong and hit very close to home, and it's hard to pass these links off as coincidental.

The fact that former Liberal Party president Mike Spitalo is the director of government relations for the SEIU should raise alarm bells across this province. It's clear that his union stands to benefit the most. To quote a story that appeared on the CBC from Mike Crawley, I would like to share the following: "Some with a more cynical view from inside Ontario's \$50-billion-a-year health care industry say the Liberals are deliberately making this move quietly. They say the biggest beneficiary of a new government-run home care agency will not be the patients receiving home care, but one particular union: SEIU Healthcare."

When a journalist publishes such a scathing report, we should all realize that something just doesn't pass the smell test. But on top of that, SEIU is described as a key financial backer of Working Ontario Women, a group that has launched a large attack ad campaign against PC Party leader Patrick Brown. The links between SEIU and the Liberals lead to serious ethics questions, especially coupled with the attack ads that were funded by SEIU.

1810

For that reason, I would like the government to answer my question from last Tuesday, and I expect a response—I hope for a response—that directly answers my question, because, in all honesty, we could save some serious time if the government does. All they have to tell me is yes or no. I do not want to hear a lengthy explanation on the merits of the policy; the Premier has already shared those talking points.

So I will ask one more time: Will the government release all of the correspondence that the Premier's office and the minister's office had with SEIU and all other relevant stakeholders ahead of their quiet October announcement for this new, secretive home care agency?

Thank you, Speaker. I thank the member opposite for being here, and I look forward to that yes-or-no answer.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): The parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care may have up to five minutes to respond.

Interjection: He only needs five.

Mr. John Fraser: I think I can do five.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I've been waiting for this all week, and it's a pleasure to respond to the member and thank her for her question.

I do want to remind the member opposite that the choices that are being made here are to give people more options in directing their care, especially those people with complex, chronic conditions who want to have more control over their care, people who need care continuously, sometimes for the rest of their lives, and sometimes increasing care. Their relationship with their caregiver is critical.

There are two ways that this works. It either provides home care clients with funding to purchase services in their care plan or to employ people to provide these services, or it provides home care clients with the opportunity to select and schedule their own personal support workers from an organization that will protect

the clients from the administrative burden and legal risk of directly employing staff.

I know the member opposite and I understand the politics of opposition going back and forth—whatever we're doing is bad, and we're guilty of something—but I don't agree with that. I don't think that's a good way to go forward.

What I would like to say is that if you want to talk with regard to consultation, it's something called the Donner report, which was in 2015. It's quite a thorough report. You can get it online. If you actually look to recommendation 13, it's very clear in recommendation 13 that this is advice that the Donner report got through the vast public consultation that Gail Donner and her colleagues did.

I would also like to remind the member opposite that this is something that we announced in last year's budget and reannounced in the fall of this year. Again, I understand the politics of it. The reality is that there were consultations. We've been very public about it. The consultations go back to 2015 and the Donner report.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Did you speak to Linda Knight?

Mr. John Fraser: Well, you asked. You asked, will we release? It's been released for almost three years. For almost three years, it has been available to you.

So I get it. Look, it's getting close to an election. I know what you guys have got to do, but I want to tell you that if you really want to take a good, hard look at this, you'll find it in the Donner report, you'll find it in our budget and you'll find it in a press release last September.

The other thing that we have to remember is that this is happening in other jurisdictions. They're doing it in other jurisdictions such as California, Maryland, Montana, Oregon and Texas, and a few of them have chosen to give their clients this option. They also do this in the UK. Washington state also has more than half of their home care clients use self-directed care, which enables them to select and hire their PSW, with the state taking responsibility for wages, benefits and taxes, similar to our agency.

Let's remember, as well, that this is something that we are piloting in this province. It's happening in a few specific places to deal with a few specific clients who have very high needs.

So I hope this is sufficient to satisfy. I hope the member is satisfied. I think you should be satisfied, but that's up to you, not up to me. I do appreciate the opportunity to have this late show. I'd be happy to send the Donner report over to you, but I think you could probably get it online, or you've maybe, hopefully, seen it online.

I just want to thank you very much. The late show was well worth waiting for.

PHARMACARE

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): The member for Elgin–Middlesex–London hasn't been happy

with an answer given by the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Therefore, the member has up to five minutes to debate the matter, and the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care may reply for up to five minutes.

I now turn it over to the member from Elgin–Middlesex–London.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Unfortunately, I have to be here tonight to discuss a simple matter that relates to the drug Orkambi, which was the substance of my question today, which in no way did the minister come close to answering. Drugs like Orkambi—this particular drug is for cystic fibrosis. Many drugs for rare diseases throughout Canada are unavailable in Ontario. The government does not pay for drugs like Orkambi.

This came about because, during the general government committee, we had a cystic fibrosis advocate at committee stating the problems he's having getting Orkambi covered. Orkambi right now is caught in the pCPA process, which is how the provinces negotiate a price. Unfortunately, for the last two years, there's been no movement on this drug. The drug Orkambi, which is very, very successful in treating people with cystic fibrosis, giving them their life back to work in the community, to have a family, to live, is unavailable to the people of Ontario because it's stuck in the pCPA.

I admitted to the advocate the fact that Orkambi isn't going to be covered, like many other rare disease drugs, because this government has failed on having accessibility to these rare disease medications. The response from the member from Kitchener Centre was that OHIP+ will pay for Orkambi. We were all flabbergasted, and it shut down the advocate's discussion. He was taken aback, because obviously it answered what he was asking for. Of course, a call and an email to the ADM proved that this was untrue. The government is not covering Orkambi and other medications for rare diseases.

Mr. Speaker, this government, this Liberal government under Kathleen Wynne and Minister Hoskins, the health minister, has failed Ontarians with rare diseases. Conditions have not been able to be met. The drugs are either denied because of their expense or they get tied up in the bureaucratic process headed by the provincial government. This has to change. Drugs like Orkambi need to be covered to give people their lives back.

The response I got from the government was, "The PC Party doesn't support OHIP+." That's false; the PC Party supports OHIP+. What the PC Party is trying to do is inject the reality of the system, that drugs like Orkambi are not going to be covered. OHIP+ will carry the same formulary and cover the same drugs as Trillium, OW, ODSP and the seniors' plan. And guess what? Those formularies, those drug plans, do not cover Orkambi or any other new, innovative medication needed for rare disease coverage.

This government has been a failure. For them to propagate the idea that OHIP+ is the saviour to everybody's needs is terrible, considering OHIP+, at the end of the day, is going to take away private coverage from

those kids 25 and under because drug plans will move away. If the government's the first payer, why would they bother to have drug coverage over the time? A lot of those kids' private coverage pays for Orkambi. So when this OHIP+ starts up and this government has failed in covering rare disease medications, those kids are going to lose coverage for drugs like Orkambi. That has to change.

This government has to come clean and be honest with the people of Ontario. Yes, we're giving free drugs to kids under 25, but the Liberal government is a failure when it comes to covering rare disease drugs and take-home cancer drugs, and they shouldn't be telling the people of Ontario otherwise. They shouldn't be writing this policy on the fly, which is leading to the errors that are occurring in our committees, where the member from Kitchener Centre is making announcements about drug coverage which aren't true.

This has to stop. They have to be honest with the people. They need to fix the system. They need to start covering drugs like Orkambi. There are many people with rare diseases in this province who are unable to access the treatments they need. There are many people suffering from cancer who can't access the new, innovative drugs. Why? It's because this government's financial mismanagement of this province has left few to no dollars to pay for these new medications, and because they've created this pCPA bureaucracy which adds time for drugs to be approved and sold and paid for by the province of Ontario.

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This government needs to look within itself. OHIP+ is good. Thank you for doing it. But don't tell people you're going to be covering medications that you're not. Don't give people false hope. It's time to be honest with Ontarians. It's time to look at the Ontario drug benefit system. It's time to find a way to find access to these rare disease drugs and fund them so that Ontarians can live quality, healthy lives.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): The parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care may have up to five minutes to reply.

Mr. John Fraser: It's a pleasure to respond to the member opposite. I would like to thank him for his question, and speak to OHIP+ and what the government is putting forward.

He's correct in saying that 4,400 drugs that are on the formulary for ODB will be covered as of January 1 for every person under 25. This is a big step forward.

What the member opposite needs to remember is, there are 4,400 drugs in the formulary. I know he's referring to a comment that was made in committee yesterday. But I know the member opposite, because of his profession, would know this: There are 4,400 drugs. I

could ask the member opposite right now whether a drug is covered or not, and even though he has some greater understanding than many of us do in this House, he may not be able to say if it's covered or it's not covered.

He also knows that the pCPA, the pan-Canadian Pharmaceutical Alliance—that's all the provinces getting together to ensure that we get the best value when we negotiate drug prices. It's not a bureaucracy that was created to slow things down. It is a national process that will ensure that we are getting the best value when we negotiate that price. We're negotiating as one, not 10 different provinces. If he wants to talk about being straightforward with people in regard to that, then he should say that out loud. He knows that.

I know the member is aware that we make decisions on pharmaceuticals and drugs that we're going to cover through an evidence-based process that's done by professionals. It's not a political process. It's done by physicians, it's done by scientists, it's done by health care economists to ensure that we are making the right decisions. These are hard decisions. The rate of growth in new drugs is incredible, and we have to make sure that they're, number one, safe, and number two, effective to ensure that we get the outcome we want, which is either a cure or relief for a person from a condition that they have.

I'll go back to politics. I get the politics of "We're six months away." I think that the member opposite in his question is exaggerating what I would consider to be—I think the member from Kitchener Centre responded in committee to her initial statement.

The member opposite knows the challenges that governments have in being able to fund drugs and ensuring that the things on the formulary are efficacious and helpful and safe for people. It's a very challenging part of health care.

We already have the most generous plan for seniors in all of Canada. We're going to have the most generous plan for Ontarians under 25 and over 65 and for those people who need exceptional access or who are on social assistance.

Again, I just say to the member opposite that there are real challenges in ensuring we get these things on the formulary, especially with issues like rare diseases, and I very much don't feel that his representation of what was put forward in committee is fair.

I would like to thank you, Speaker, for the opportunity to respond to this.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I'd like to thank all members for their contribution, on both sides.

There being no further matter to debate, I deem the motion to adjourn to be carried. This House stands adjourned until tomorrow morning at 9 o'clock.

The House adjourned at 1825.

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Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
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Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Damerla, Hon. / L'hon. Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Minister of Seniors Affairs / Ministre des Affaires des personnes âgées
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Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Dong, Han (LIB)	Trinity–Spadina	
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Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Flynn, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	

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Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
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Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor–Tecumseh	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Hoggarth, Ann (LIB)	Barrie	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Hunter, Hon. / L'hon. Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Jaczek, Hon. / L'hon. Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Kiwala, Sophie (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Minister of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales Minister Responsible for Small Business / Ministre responsable des Petites Entreprises Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs Minister Responsible for Accessibility / Ministre responsable de l'Accessibilité
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MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	
MacLaren, Jack (IND)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Malhi, Harinder (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	Chair of Cabinet / Présidente du Conseil des ministres Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Development / Ministre de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Formation professionnelle Minister Responsible for Digital Government / Ministre responsable de l'Action pour un gouvernement numérique Minister of Municipal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires municipales Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport
Martins, Cristina (LIB)	Davenport	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	
Mauro, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
McGarry, Hon. / L'hon. Kathryn (LIB)	Cambridge	
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Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research, Innovation and Science / Ministre de la Recherche, de l'Innovation et des Sciences
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	
Naidoo-Harris, Hon. / L'hon. Indira (LIB)	Halton	Minister of the Status of Women / Ministre de la condition féminine Minister Responsible for Early Years and Child Care / Ministre responsable de la Petite enfance et de la Garde d'enfants
Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Attorney General / Procureur général Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
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Oosterhoff, Sam (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Potts, Arthur (LIB)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Romano, Ross (PC)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB)	Guelph	President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thibeault, Hon. / L'hon. Glenn (LIB)	Sudbury	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Vernile, Daiene (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	Deputy Speaker / Vice-présidente
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